NEWS / A2

United Opposition, Wednesday Group talks hit snag

LIFESTYLE / C1

New year's shocker: San Miguel kills orchestra, chorale

ENTERTAINMENT / E1

Sunshine Dizon not sitting pretty as 'Bakekang'

WORLD / A30

135 killed in deadliest Iraq suicide bombing

Priests are human, too, bloopers show

By Christian V. Esguerra

THE RUSH OF MOTHERS excited over their first-borns' baptism led a priest to commit the unthinkable.

At a mass baptism ceremony not long ago, the

PRIESTS/ A23

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Monday, February 5, 2007 ★★ 8 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 59 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Rock icon pays tribute to Imelda minus shoes

NEW YORK—INDEPENDENT ROCK ICON DAVID Byrne took the stage at Carnegie Hall on Saturday to unveil for a US audience a collection of songs about the life of former Philippine First Lady Imelda Marcos—minus the shoes.

Byrne, 54, best known as the frontman for the influential off-beat 1980s pop band "Talking Heads," performed the sold-out show "Here Lies Love," accompanied on stage by two singers,

ROCK ICON/ A19

MNLF releases general

2-night drama ends as government agrees to tripartite meeting

By Fe Zamora and Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

JOLO, SULU—THEY were detained for two nights in a camp surrounded by more than 1,000 armed men. But when they were finally allowed to leave, their hosts even butchered a cow for their going-away lunch.

Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Undersecretary for the Peace Process Ramon Santos and about 20 companions stepped out of the camp of the Moro National Liberation Front yesterday afternoon, ending a drama that lasted for some 50 hours and ended with the MNLF receiving cash, food and much-needed publicity.

Dolorfino, in a white shirt, was hugged by Presidential Adviser for the Peace Process Jesus Dureza at Camp Teodulo Bautista where a helicopter had brought the general and his companions after their release from the MNLF camp in Panamao on Jolo island.

"We are happy that the crisis is over," Dolorfino said, smiling broadly.

Santos, a former general himself who was almost not allowed to leave the MNLF camp, according to an INQUIRER informant, wore a black jacket and a worried expression on his face.

One of those in the detained group said the MNLF had initially wanted to hold on to Santos for "leverage" with the government.

Santos denied this and suggested that the absence of media during a ceremony inside the guerrilla camp might have caused the delay in their release.

"The media were not there so we had to wait," Santos told the INQUIRER.

An INQUIRER informant privy to the negotiations said MNLF Commander Habier Malik had insisted on the presence of media during the turnover to the government side of firearms captured by the MNLF in previous encounters.

"No media, no release," was a condition which the source said Malik had made before releasing Dolorfino's group.

MNLF/ A22

MARINE Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino (in white shirt) is welcomed by Jesus Dureza, presidential adviser on the peace process, upon arrival at Camp Bautista in Bustos, Jolo, after spending two nights at the Moro National Liberation Front's camp in Panamao, Sulu. REM ZAMORA

Gov't may allow Nur's provisional release

By DJ Yap and Christine O. Avendaño

THE GOVERNMENT IS OPEN to the possibility of releasing Muslim leader Nur Misuari on his own recognizance so he could represent the Moro National Liberation Front in tripartite talks in Saudi Arabia, an interior department official said yesterday.

To be released on one's own recognizance means a jailed person is freed without bail.

The matter of who will have charge of Misuari, should he be freed, is still up for discussion, Assistant Secretary Brian Yamsuan said yesterday.

He said Misuari's provisional release would be discussed next week by the government peace panel and the Moro rebels.

"It all depends on the results of negotiations between the peace panel and the MNLF next week," Yamsuan said.

But Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita appeared yesterday to take a hardline stance on the idea of Misuari's release, citing two reasons why this would be impossible.

"Number One, Misuari is facing a serious criminal charge and is detained. And Number Two, who is he going to represent? He has no firm grip of the leadership

GOV'T MAY ALLOW/ A22

RP maids rally anew in HK over guidelines

By Blanche S. Rivera
Contributor

HONG KONG—FOR THE second straight Sunday, all roads taken by Filipino maids on their lone day off led to Admiralty's Harcourt Garden in front of the Philippine Consulate.

Unappeased by the recent government decision relaxing the new deployment rules for Filipino maids, thousands of domestic helpers again filled Hong Kong's streets to seek the scrapping of the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration's (POEA) guidelines and the resignation of the Philippines' top labor officials.

About a thousand members of the Jesus is Lord (JIL) Church, the biggest Philippine evangelical Christian group in Hong Kong, turned up at yesterday's protest as part of Bangon Pilipinas' delegation.

At least 13 other church groups and Catholic parishes here joined the campaign.

"Ang mga taong simbahan, hindi lang nananalangin, kumikilos din (Church people do not only pray, they also act)," JIL pastor Edgar Robles told a crowd of some 3,000 Filipinos at Harcourt Garden.

Organizers said about the

RP MAIDS/ A23

UN-sponsored report smoking gun on global warming

By Amando Doronila

(First of two parts)

THE LIGHTS AT THE EIFFEL Tower in Paris went off for five minutes on Thursday evening as the world awaited the release of the United Nations-sponsored report providing the "smoking gun" on the threat of global warming to life on earth.

Parisians switched off their lights to raise awareness about energy efficiency and fossil-fuel pollution, which is blamed for climate change. The blackout spread to hotels near the tower, where the world's leading climate scientists were fine-tuning their report, forcing them to burn the midnight oil.

ANALYSIS

When the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued the report at the gray Unesco headquarters in Paris on Friday evening, it shocked the world with an apocalyptic vision of a looming ecological disaster unless steps were taken to check emissions of greenhouse gases linked to global warming.

The report warned of melting ice sheets, rising sea levels, heat waves, worsening droughts, heavy rainfall in some regions, and stronger hurricanes and storms (in tropical countries, presumably including the Philippines) in the decades to come.

These are the consequences of global warming due to the greenhouse gases released into the atmosphere. Instead of radiating the heat from the sun back to space, the greenhouse gases trap it.

In the most powerful language yet used by scientists in their assessment of the future of the planet, the report concluded for the first time that the global evidence of climate change caused by fossil fuel (mainly oil and coal) emissions was "unequivocal."

UN-SPONSORED/ A9

A YEAR AFTER Survivors and victims of the Wowowee stampede hear Mass outside the gates of the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra) during a vigil to commemorate the first anniversary of the tragedy that killed 71 people and injured hundreds of others. *(Story in Metro, Page A26.)* RAFFY LERMA

Pacquiao-Morales rematch over beer

By Jasmine W. Payo and Francis Ochoa

THERE WERE TENSE MOMENTS.

And it wasn't the staged tension, where Erik "El Terrible" Morales crashes a beer joint to the strains of a Mexican ditty, approaches a table where Manny Pacquiao and trainer Freddie Roach are seated and engages the Filipino ring icon in a staring match.

During the making of the San Miguel Corp. commercial that is not only sure to spawn spoofs—proof of its potential blockbuster caliber—but also sure to go down in advertising lore as a major coup, there was still leftover tension from a bitter rivalry.

"You could feel [that they were uncomfortable with each other]," said a San Miguel insider, who revealed to the INQUIRER what happened behind the scenes on condition of anonymity.

The first scene that was shot was the toast scene, and the official revealed that when "they needed to sit right next to each other, you [could] tell by the body language [that they were uncomfortable]. Erik was leaning [to] the left, Manny was leaning [to] the right."

It did not help that Roach, the American trainer who sparred

PACQUIAO-MORALES/ A19

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2007

EZ2 (1) (29) | Mid-Day (2) (9) (7) | SUERTRES (1) (6) (2) | Evening

(All in exact order)

SUPERLOTTO 6/49

(7) (15) (16) (23) (24) (41)

P16,372,549.80

Second FRONTPAGE

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Bicol region, eastern and central Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/04/07 SOURCE PAGASA

UNO-Wednesday Group talks hit snag

By TJ Burgonio

WITH ONLY A WEEK TO GO BEFORE THE DEADLINE for the filing of candidacies for the May polls, fresh kinks have emerged in talks between the United Opposition (UNO) and the incumbent senators' "Wednesday Group" for a unified senatorial slate.

It now appears that the Wednesday Group of Senate President Manuel Villar Jr., Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, and Senators Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo is unhappy with the way the UNO group of deposed President Joseph Estrada has been treating them.

Villar heads the Nacionalista Party and Recto is a party mate. Pangilinan is the national chair of Drilon's Liberal Party wing, while Arroyo has no party.

"UNO should not insist that we go under their wing and join them with a take it or leave it stance," said Pangilinan in a text response to the question of what was keeping their group from finally forging the coalition with UNO.

"To do so, I believe, is not the way to unity. Negotiation rather than dictation is the better course of action," he said.

Pangilinan added that if the talks failed, their group was open to the idea of "going it alone."

It was the first time that Pangilinan openly admitted "differences" with UNO.

He, Villar and Recto have been pushing for an opposition slate with incumbent senators forming the core, a position that apparently put them at odds with UNO.

UNO leaders were set to meet last night to thresh out the matter at the home of Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay, president of PDP-Laban, which forms part of UNO together with Estrada's Puwersa ng Masang Pilipino (PMP), according to Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

UNO leaders announced last Wednesday their initial list of eight candidates that left slots for Villar, Pangilinan, Recto and Arroyo.

The INQUIRER tried but was unable to reach PMP spokesperson Rufus Rodriguez for comment.

Officials in the camp of ousted President Joseph Estrada, however, were quick to say the remaining slots were reserved for the four.

Ultimatum

The "premature announcement" forced the LP-NP to cancel their formal announcement of their coalition at the Senate. That same day, UNO issued its ultimatum to the Wednesday Group to make up its mind, according to a source.

Those initially drafted by UNO were Lacson, former Senators Loren Legarda and John Osmeña, Representatives Francis Escudero, Alan Peter Cayetano of NP, and Benigno Aquino III of LP, San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito and lawyer Aquilino Pimentel III.

"Apparently, this is just a matter of pride," Lacson had said on dzBB, theorizing that the Wednesday Group was hurt because they did not form the front-line of the coalition slate, and that's why they now had reservations about joining the UNO-led coalition.

"I've heard this from them that the core should come from incumbent senators. I think that's a little petty. What's important is that we're able to form a 12-man slate, instead of thinking of who should take the lead. That can be set aside," he said.

Work together

Pangilinan said their group "need not join them (UNO) to be able to work with them to squarely address vital issues facing the nation," pointing out that senators from different political affiliations had managed to work together to craft legislation and stop repressive administration policies.

"We have shown that we cannot be dictated upon by Malacañang or other interest groups. Why then should we allow ourselves to be dictated upon now?" he said.

The senator said they welcomed any chance to unite with other individuals and groups, but this should be based on "mutual respect" and a "common vision" of ensuring that the Senate remain as "an independent and vigilant institution committed to the rule of law."

Pangilinan said they were keeping their options open since the talks with UNO were still in flux, and would decide whether to go it alone at the "proper time."

Escudero tells youth: Country needs you now

BAGUIO CITY—COURTING THE SUPPORT of the youth, Sorsogon Rep. Francis "Chiz" Escudero spoke at a student forum here and urged the youth to take a more active role in shaping the future of the nation.

"*Kalimutan na ang sinabi ni* Rizal *na ang kabataan ang pag-asa ng bayan. Ang dapat maging sigaw at bagong panawagan ng kabataan ay 'Maasahan na ako ng bayan—ako, ngayon at dito* (Let us forget Rizal's words that the youth is the hope of the motherland. The youth's new call should be 'My country can depend on me—here and now),'" Escudero told some 150 students and members of militant groups at the forum on Saturday at the University of Baguio.

He also discussed the plans and prospects of the political opposition in the 2007 elections.

"Part of being young is wanting to change things even when others tell you to accept things as they are, and believing that even though earlier generations had failed, our generation is different, our generation can do it," said Escudero, a senatorial candidate with the opposition.

He said the youth should not waste their right to vote as it is only during elections that all Filipinos become equal and are given the opportunity to chart the country's future.

He said the youth must be recognized as active partners in the transformation of the country.

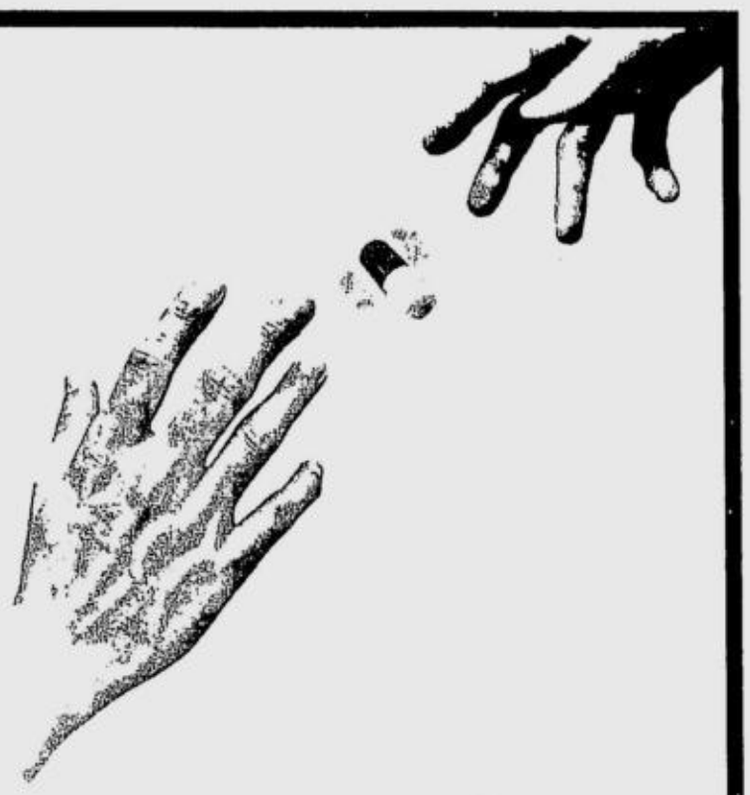
Escudero also stressed that Filipinos needed to change and learn how to follow laws.

"The orientation and views of Filipinos must change," he said, noting that change must begin with the top leaders of the country.

He said the solutions to the nation's problems were already in the country's body of laws.

"There is a law for everything that is prohibited. The law just needs to be implemented and followed," Escudero said. *Donna Demetillo with reports from Sweden Bognalbal, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

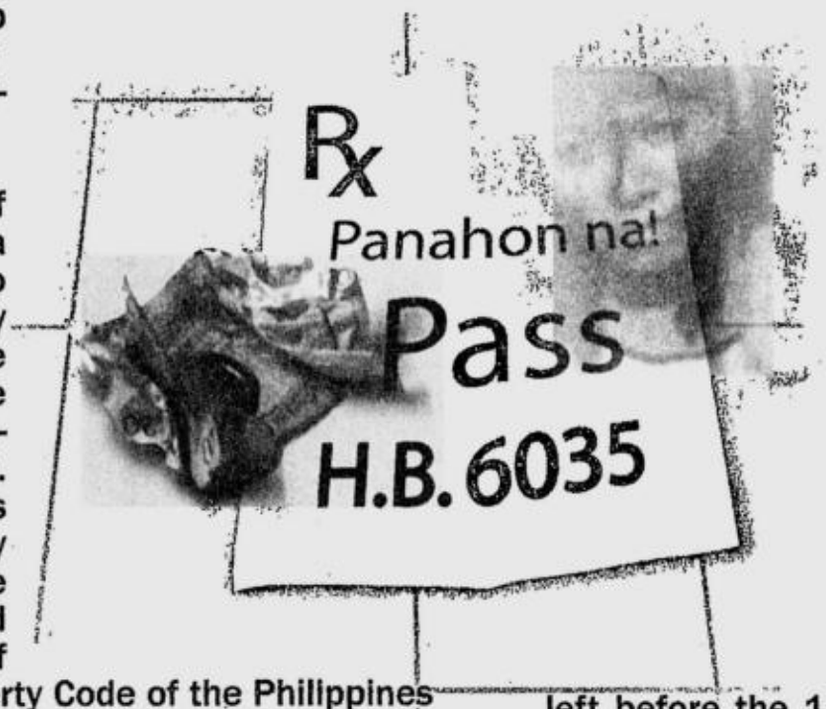
De-kalidad at abot-kayang gamot, ngayon na!



HOUSE BILL NO. 6035, IPASA!

Panahon na upang guminhawa mula sa sakit na hindi magamot dahil sa presyong hindi maabot.

This is the clamor of our people. This is the consensus of our legislators * who support H. B. 6035, the proposed measure that will help bring down the sky-high prices of medicines.



And this is the goal of H. E. President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo who, on 22 January 2007, certified to the necessity of the immediate enactment of House Bill No. 6035 "to address public emergency arising from the urgent need to amend certain provisions of the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines in order to protect public health by creating an environment that will lower the prices of, as well as ensure open and adequate access to, drugs and medicines particularly by the poor and underprivileged who can hardly afford to purchase patented drugs and medicines because of exorbitant and prohibitive prices."

THE KEY IS COMPETITION

Market competition is the key toward achieving the common agenda of lower medicine prices.

House Bill No. 6035 aims to open the Philippine drug market to greater competition, provide greater support to Filipino generic drug companies, and rationalize and update our intellectual property laws to conform to world standards and best practices, as recognized by the World Health Organization and the World Trade Organization. It aims to strengthen government-use provisions to enable the State to respond quickly and decisively to public health crises and challenges.

Its purpose is to help realize the dream of every sick Filipino to get well by making quality medicines accessible and affordable.

THE HOUSE MUST ACT NOW

Starting today, only three session days are left before the 13th Congress adjourns for the May 14, 2007 elections. That's three more days for our honorable Congressmen to approve House Bill No. 6035 and write history as proponents of the Filipinos' health.

"Aanhin pa ang damo, kung patay na ang kabayo?"

We can't afford to wait any longer. We must not delay or postpone any more a potent remedy to a malignant illness. We appeal to our lawmakers' sense of public good, and ask that they exercise political will to pass House Bill 6035 NOW!

* Hon. Representatives Junie Cua; Ana Theresia "Risa" Hontiveros-Baraquel; Arthur "Dodo" Y. Pingoy, Jr., M. D.; Roseller L. Barinaga; Eufrocino M. Codilla, Darlene R. Antonino-Custodio; Ma. Milagros "Mitos" H. Magsaysay; and Reylina "Neneng" G. Nicolas; Edcel C. Lagman; Rodolfo C. Bacani; Felix R. Alfelor, Jr.; Rey B. Aquino, M.D.; Ferjenel G. Biron, M.D.; Danton Q. Bueser; Teodoro A. Casino; Del R. De Guzman; Janette L. Garin, M.D.; Roilo S. Golez; Eduardo R. Gullas; Gregorio T. Ipong; Hermilando I. Mandanas; Roger G. Mercado; Abraham Kahlil B. Mitra; Pedro M. Pancho; Prospero A. Pichay, Jr.; Rizalina L. Seachon-Lanete; Mary Ann L. Susano; Acmad M. Tomawis; Luis R. Villafuerte; & Renato "Ka Rene" B. Magtubo; Jesus Crispin Remulla

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Disaster-prone RP heeding UN warning–GMA

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO IS taking seriously the warning aired by a United Nation's panel on climate change since the Philippines has experienced for itself the destructive effects of the skewed weather patterns caused by global warming.

"The Philippines views with deep concern the UN report on global warming and part of our long-term development agenda is the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions," Ms Arroyo said in a statement. "We shall march with the world in the struggle against global warming."

The UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) warned that the greenhouse effect caused by pollution from the use of fossil fuels would disrupt the global climate system for the next 1,000 years. The UN is currently weighing whether to call a meeting on global warming considering that the Kyoto Protocol, which sets international targets for pollution controls, will expire in 2012.

Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor said the rising global awareness on the destructive effects of global warming should prompt the United States to sign the Kyoto Protocol and lead the world in cutting down on pollution.

The President noted that the "Philippines itself is becoming victim to destructive storms and floods as well as sharp changes in climate, taking a heavy toll on lives, crops and property."

She has ordered her Cabinet to "constantly keep an eye on the caveats of the UN on global warming in all our development programs." *Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.*

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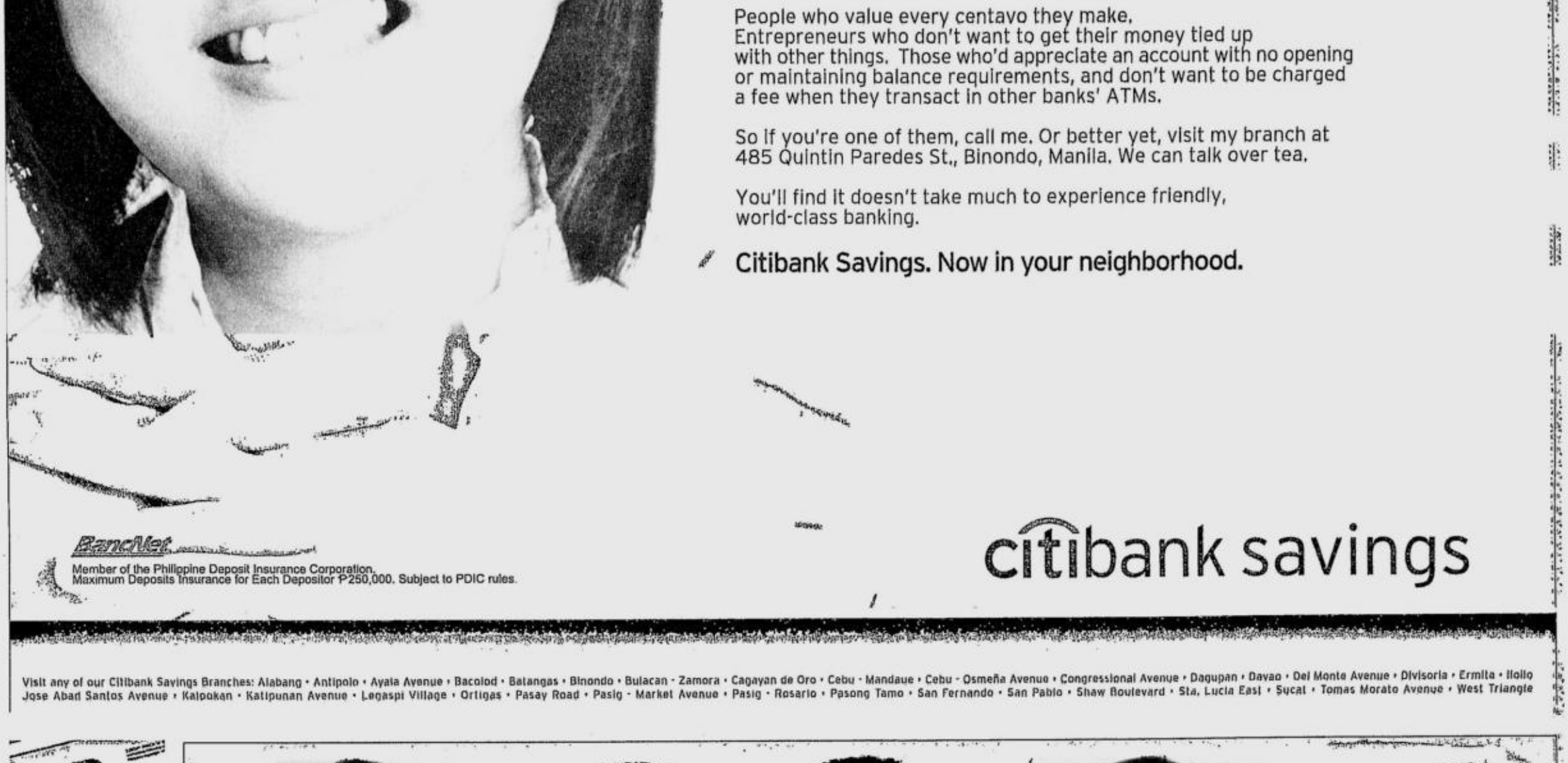

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		SOCIAL SECURITY			EC	TOTAL CONTRIBUTION			TOTAL CONTRIBUTION
		ER	EE	Total	ER	ER	EE	Total	
1,000 - 1,249.99	1,000	70.70	33.30	104	10	80.70	33.30	114	104
1,250 - 1,749.99	1,500	106.00	50.00	156	10	116.00	50.00	166	156
1,750 - 2,249.99	2,000	141.30	66.70	208	10	151.30	66.70	218	208
2,250 - 2,749.99	2,500	176.70	83.30	260	10	186.70	83.30	270	260
2,750 - 3,249.99	3,000	212.00	100.00	312	10	222.00	100.00	322	312
3,250 - 3,749.99	3,500	247.30	116.70	364	10	257.30	116.70	374	364
3,750 - 4,249.99	4,000	282.70	133.30	416	10	292.70	133.30	426	416
4,250 - 4,749.99	4,500	318.00	150.00	468	10	328.00	150.00	478	468
4,750 - 5,249.99	5,000	353.30	166.70	520	10	363.30	166.70	530	520
5,250 - 5,749.99	5,500	388.70	183.30	572	10	398.70	183.30	582	572
5,750 - 6,249.99	6,000	424.00	200.00	624	10	434.00	200.00	634	624
6,250 - 6,749.99	6,500	459.30	216.70	676	10	469.30	216.70	686	676
6,750 - 7,249.99	7,000	494.70	233.30	728	10	504.70	233.30	738	728
7,250 - 7,749.99	7,500	530.00	250.00	780	10	540.00	250.00	790	780
7,750 - 8,249.99	8,000	565.30	266.70	832	10	575.30	266.70	842	832
8,250 - 8,749.99	8,500	600.70	283.30	884	10	610.70	283.30	894	884
8,750 - 9,249.99	9,000	636.00	300.00	936	10	646.00	300.00	946	936
9,250 - 9,749.99	9,500	671.30	316.70	988	10	681.30	316.70	998	988
9,750 - 10,249.99	10,000	706.70	333.30	1,040	10	716.70	333.30	1,050	1,040
10,250 - 10,749.99	10,500	742.00	350.00	1,092	10	752.00	350.00	1,102	1,092
10,750 - 11,249.99	11,000	777.30	366.70	1,144	10	787.30	366.70	1,154	1,144
11,250 - 11,749.99	11,500	812.70	383.30	1,196	10	822.70	383.30	1,206	1,196
11,750 - 12,249.99	12,000	848.00	400.00	1,248	10	858.00	400.00	1,258	1,248
12,250 - 12,749.99	12,500	883.30	416.70	1,300	10	893.30	416.70	1,310	1,300
12,750 - 13,249.99	13,000	918.70	433.30	1,352	10	928.70	433.30	1,362	1,352
13,250 - 13,749.99	13,500	954.00	450.00	1,404	10	964.00	450.00	1,414	1,404
13,750 - 14,249.99	14,000	989.30	466.70	1,456	10	999.30	466.70	1,466	1,456
14,250 - 14,749.99	14,500	1,024.70	483.30	1,508	10	1,034.70	483.30	1,518	1,508
14,750 - over	15,000	1,060.00	500.00	1,560	30	1,090.00	500.00	1,590	1,560

*The minimum monthly salary credit for OFW-members is ₱5,000

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NEW **OFW:** Anytime during the applicable year for January to December contributions; or until January 31 of the following year for October to December contributions

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Cayetano still won't buy German bank's statement

By Michael Lim Ubac

"USELESS AND INCONCLUSIVE" was how House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano described the new certification issued by HypoVereins Bank in Germany which states that not one member of the First Family had accounts or made transactions with the bank in the past 10 years.

Cayetano said there's "nothing new with the certification, as expected and as usual, it's for show and propaganda, but tells us nothing."

The opposition lawmaker from Taguig-Pateros noted that even the waiver signed by First Gentleman Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo in Munich allowing bank officials to divulge his bank accounts to the public "appears to be a limited waiver."

"This is useless, the limited waiver doesn't include accounts in dummies' names, in fictitious names or in names of corporations," he said, adding: "FG owes the Filipino people a big apology."

Cayetano is set to present his evidence that the First Family had stashed millions of dollars in Germany and other parts of the world during a hearing tomorrow.

"It's time for Cayetano to come clean," said Davao del Sur Rep. Douglas Cagas, shortly after learning that Representatives Roberto Cajes, Rodante Marcoleta and Antonio Cerilles, along with Arroyo and the latter's two lawyers, had obtained the bank certification.

Cagas, a member of the ethics committee, said Cayetano, with his latest actuation, was only "digging a deeper hole for himself by calling the ethics committee members defenders and protectors of the First Family."

He said it was not just unfair for Cayetano to hit the committee members, but also plain dishonesty on his part to refuse to admit his mistake.

"It's not a joke to be traveling to a far place like Germany and probe the bank accounts issue. He should even ask for pardon not just from the Arroyos, but also from his colleagues for leading the committee on a wild goose chase," Cagas said.

A copy of the new bank certification was faxed to the INQUIRER. Dated Feb. 2, it bore the signatures of HypoVereins Bank vice president Peter Reisner, senior legal counsel Michael Henniger, general secretariat head Ev Vollmann, and compliance officer Klaus Michael Ploss.

The certification stated: "Further to those various Certifications, based on the Bank's records covering the past ten (10) years from the date of this letter, we confirm that during this ten-year period Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Jose Miguel T. Arroyo, Ignacio T. Arroyo, Juan Miguel Macapagal Arroyo, Diosdado Macapagal Arroyo, and Lourdes Evangeline Macapagal Arroyo, have never had any account, placement, investment or transaction with the Bank, or any of its branches world-wide, in their names, singly, or in any combination among themselves."

The bank officials, who met with Arroyo and the fact-finding team on Feb. 2, confirmed the certifications the bank had issued to the First Gentleman in August and September 2006 showing that the Arroyo family did not have any bank accounts there.

The bank also affirmed its strict adherence and compliance to international money-laundering statutes.

Correction

IN THE FEB. 4 ISSUE, the banner story—"General held hostage"—referred to the MILF (Moro Islamic Liberation Front) as involved in the detention of the government peace team in Jolo. Those involved were members of the Moro National Liberation Front, as stated in the second paragraph of the story. Nur Misuari was also erroneously referred to as MILF chair. Misuari is chair of the MNLF.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

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Governors hit snub on app'ts of police chiefs

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE LEAGUE OF PROVINCES of the Philippines (LPP) has complained to President Macapagal-Arroyo that provincial police directors had been appointed without the approval of the governors in their respective provinces.

Bohol Gov. Erico Aumentado, president of the 79-member LPP, said 14 governors complained during the LPP meeting last Friday that they had not been consulted in the appointment of new provincial police directors.

Some of the 14 provinces are Camarines Sur, Batangas, Southern Leyte, Masbate, Aklan and Capiz.

In a phone interview, Aumentado said that new police directors had been appointed to 38 provinces last month.

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon ordered the replacement of provincial directors starting last month because most of them had completed their two-year tours of duty at their posts.

But Aumentado said the PNP should abide by the provisions of the Local Government Code (Republic Act No. 7160) which provides that governors should have the last say in the appointment of provincial police directors.

Under the law, the PNP will submit three nominees for police director to the local executives. The governor or mayor will then select from among the nominees, or request for a new list of nominees.

The governors asked the President to intervene in the problem during a meeting in Malacañang on Friday.

Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, who was in the meeting, assured the LPP that the problem would be resolved today, Aumentado said.

LPP assistant secretary general Alex Raoul Villano said he would meet with police officials to discuss the problem.

Baguio councilors want to know what Korean signs mean

BAGUIO CITY—MANY SIGNBOARDS AND streamers marketing goods to the growing Korean community in this cool mountain city now need to be translated back to English, if a proposed ordinance pushes through.

Councilor Federico Mandapat Jr. sponsored a measure last week seeking to require all Baguio City markers and advertising streamers written in a foreign script or language to come with their English translations.

Mandapat told the city council that the proposed law was necessary because foreign enterprises or businesses catering to foreign markets must provide information about their businesses.

The measure requires businesses, schools and buildings with outdoor signage to include "a corresponding English translation of all signboards, bulletin boards, streamers and posters written in a foreign language in order that the general public may be made aware of the contents."

Failure to include a translation means the city will immediately tear down the signboard.

Baguio businesses have started posting marketing streamers printed in Korean because of the huge South Korean population in the summer capital.

The Bureau of Immigration also noted a rise in Korean tourists and students here since 2000.

Many of the signboards written in Korean belong to Korean businesses and schools that operate in Baguio. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Monday, February 5, 2007
5th Week in Ordinary Time
Agatha

1st Reading: Gen 1:1-19
Gospel: Mark 6:53-56

Having crossed the lake, Jesus and his disciples came ashore at Gennesaret where they tied up the boat. As soon as they landed, people recognized Jesus and ran to spread the news throughout the countryside. Wherever he was they brought to him the sick lying on their mats. And wherever he went, to villages, towns or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplace and begged him to let them touch just the fringe of his cloak. And all who touched him were cured.

Commentary

We go back to the very beginning, covering the first 4 days: creation of light, heavens and the earth, light, moon, sun, stars, planets, dry land, and every kind of food, tree, greens. Are we in awe of what we are given; and about how fragile our existence is, yet how carefully made to sustain us?

Jesus is about the work of recreation, of healing, making whole and reconstituting human beings. Everyone comes to him, bringing others that need to be touched, even by the tassel of his cloak. His power is given freely to anyone who seeks it. This is the same power as that of creation, the power of God to make and keep and make ever new. Do we seek this power for others, for the earth, and for ourselves?

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'Coy' Loi may run if Erap 'talks me into it'

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER OPENLY DECLARING THAT SHE wouldn't be seeking reelection, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito yesterday said she might seek a fresh term in May if her husband, ousted President Joseph Estrada, talked her into it.

Ejercito, a doctor of psychiatry by profession, is eligible to run for reelection but had indicated in the past few weeks that she was getting out of politics to take care of her husband who is detained at his Tanay, Rizal, rest house awaiting the verdict in his plunder trial.

Ejercito said her husband had asked her to be his caregiver.

Yesterday, things appeared to have changed.

"If President (Joseph) Estrada reconsiders his position and asks me to run, then I am physically and mentally fit to do so," said Ejercito said in a statement.

She said she had received "words of encouragement" from some people, including fellow woman lawmaker Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Manila Bulletin publisher Emilio Yap.

The United Opposition-led coalition had included San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, Estrada's son by actress Guia Gomez, in its 12-man senatorial lineup, supposedly in place of the former president's wife whom he had asked not to run.

While acknowledging that her husband would have the last say, Senator Ejercito said she wanted to serve another term so she could see through the passage of some pending bills on health care and environmental protection she had worked on.

She was the principal author of Republic Act No. 9262, or the Violence Against Women and Children's Act of 2004, which is now being used by social workers and law enforcement agencies in helping women and child victims seek justice for abuses.

If she decides not to run, Ejercito said the Senate would be left without a medical practitioner "to make the country's health and medical services more relevant" since Senate Pro Tempore Juan Flavier, a medical doctor, is also retiring this year.

Meanwhile, lawyer Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel III, son of Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr., said in a statement he would file his certificate of candidacy at the Commission on Elections today.

The young Pimentel, who topped the bar in 1990, is also running under the UNO-led coalition.

He would be the "voice" of the Mindanaonons, the youth, socio-civic groups, local governments, professionals and disadvantaged sectors such as cultural communities and subsistence farmers and fishermen, he said.

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DOH: Ready to take on bird flu

By Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes
Inquirer Northern Luzon

DAGUPAN CITY—THE DEPARTMENT OF Health has declared its readiness against the avian influenza in the event the dreaded virus reaches the country.

"We are very ready in terms of stockpiles of Tamiflu, the drug of choice against the avian flu. We have P70 million to P80 million worth of [Tamiflu] in various warehouses of the DOH," Health Secretary Francisco Duque III told reporters here on Saturday. *(See related stories in The World, Page A29)*

He said the DOH's centers for infectious diseases were also ready, like the San Lazaro Institute for Tropical Diseases, Western Visayas Medical Center and the Davao Regional Medical Center.

"We are confidently ready because we were successful in managing SARS (severe acute respiratory syndrome) in 2003. The level of preparation [in managing the possible outbreak of bird flu in the country] is similar to that of SARS," he said.

Only two Filipinos died from SARS—a Pangasinan woman who had come from Canada and her father whom she infected.

"Knock on wood. I hope we will not get (bird flu cases). We remain to be bird flu-free. We are one of the only three (Asian) countries remaining without bird flu [cases]. The others are Brunei and Singapore," Duque said.

The DOH, he said, continues to link up with the Department of Agriculture because detection of bird flu cases and preventing the virus from spreading to domestic fowl is the DOH's concern, he said.

Duque said that after the virus infects the fowl and spreads, there is a possibility of the virus' transmission from an infected bird to humans.

As for migratory birds bringing the virus to the country, Duque said it was the responsibility of the DA to take the necessary precautions and measures that these birds do not mix with local birds.

"We warn the public against shooting and hunting as the birds get disoriented, lose their sense of direction and in all likelihood, mingle with local birds and chickens," he said.

SC: Carriers liable

THE SUPREME COURT HAS UNANIMOUSLY ruled that shipping lines or carriers are liable for the loss of cargo when a ship sinks—unless they can prove that "extraordinary diligence" was exercised to prevent the sea accident.

The ruling stemmed from the petition of Cebu Salvage Corp. (CSC) whose vessel carrying 1,100 metric tons of silica quartz sank off the coast of Opol, Misamis Oriental, in 1984.

The goods were used in the manufacture of fiberglass.

The cargo owner, Maria Cristina Chemical Industries Inc., later collected P211,500 in insurance money from Philippine Home Assurance Corp.

The insurance company later filed and won a case against CSC in the Makati Regional Trial Court and the Court of Appeals. The SC, in a 10-page decision penned by Justice Renato Corona, upheld the two previous rulings.

The SC said that as a common carrier, CSC was responsible for the lost cargo.

It said that CSC failed to prove that it exercised "extraordinary diligence" to prevent such loss.

Christian V. Esguerra

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Int'l media watchdog gives Arroyo gov't failing grade on press freedom

By Jofelle P. Tesorio
Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE PARIS-BASED REPORTERS WITHOUT Borders (RWB), an international media watchdog, gave the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo a failing mark in upholding press freedom last year.

In its annual report released on Feb. 1, the RWB said murders, assaults, arrests, abusive law suits and censorship were the hallmark of 2006 in the Philippines.

RWB added that despite the arrests of the suspected killers, the authorities failed to stem the wave of violence against journalists—where at least six were killed while doing their job in 2006, majority of whom were presenters on local radio stations.

They were Rolly Cañete, who was gunned down in Pagadian; Fernando Batul, who was shot while on his way to dyPR station in Puerto Princesa City and Orlando Mendoza, who was murdered in April.

These journalists received threats before they were killed.

The international media watchdog also took note of at least 25 murder attempts and assaults and 10 arrests in 2006.

The report also cited the authorities' failure to mount a search for Joey Estriber, a journalist in Aurora province who was kidnapped in March. He had spoken out against illegal logging in the region.

"Gloria Arroyo's administration has been widely criticized for its inability to act against the murderers of opposition and human rights activists. Some politically committed journalists have been victims of this political violence as in the case of Mazel and George Vigo who were killed on Mindanao Island in June. Community media defending the rights of peasant farmers were also targeted. In July, armed men torched a building housing Radyo Cagayano, one of whose presenters, a peasant union leader, was killed a few months later. The military is suspected of being behind these attacks," the report said.

The press also found itself facing a new enemy in the person of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, who took out a raft of defamation suits, RWB said.

"While her husband was lodging 'defamation' complaints against more than 40 journalists, President Arroyo said, on 18 November 2006, that her government was 'respectful of press freedom, an institution of Philippines democracy,'" the annual report stated.

But on the same day, journalist Ellen Tordesillas, a stern critic of the government, received an e-mail warning her: "Your days are numbered."

The report said "the barrage of libel suits brought by the 'First Gentleman' in a country where defamation is still a criminal offense, put the liberty of scores of journalists in danger."

The First Gentleman claimed a total of P141 million in damages against 45 journalists, including their publications.

But on Dec. 28, the sued journalists and other members of the media brought a civil case against Mr. Arroyo for violating press freedom and civil rights and demanded a symbolic P12.5 million in damages.

Mr. Arroyo's legal counsel dismissed the suit as "garbage case" and claimed it was the right of his client to seek redress whenever he felt aggrieved and his reputation tarnished.

While there were some successes in the struggle against the murderers of journalists—such as the Marlene Esperat case where four men were found guilty of the murder, the RWB said "collusion inside the justice system allowed those who ordered the killing to escape court for the time being."

Just recently, a case was recommended filed against the alleged masterminds who were top regional executives of the Department of Agriculture.

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Soldiers get own houses

PALAYAN CITY—More than 200 soldiers here will have a home they can call their own as Army officials on Saturday gave them the ownership certificates to houses and lots they had acquired through the government's Kalinga sa Kawal program.

Lt. Gen. Romeo Tolentino, Army chief, and former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez, co-sponsor of the program, handed the certificates to 226 soldiers on Saturday at the housing site in Barangay Caballero here.

Jimenez, who gave P5.65 million representing half of the cost of each house built at the site, said he would also donate a chapel and a school building for the soldiers' community.

The package awarded to each recipient was composed of a 300-square meter lot and a core house costing P50,000 with provisions for expansion.

Army officials said the soldiers would pay for half the cost of the house through the Army's provident fund.

Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon

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UN-sponsored report smoking gun on global warming

From page A1

The report said bluntly that the unprecedented rise in the earth's surface temperature over the past few years had "very likely" been caused by human activity. The phrase means that the scientists were 90 percent certain of their conclusion. It cranked up the IPCC's previous assessment in 2001, which gave a probability of 66 percent.

First part

The report, "Climate Change 2007: The Physical Science Basis," is the first part of the latest report of the IPCC, which was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization and the UN Environment Program to guide policymakers on the impact of climate change.

The IPCC issues a report every six years. The latest report had contributions from 2,500 scientists all over the world. It took the panel six years to produce the report, involving rounds of rigorous peer reviews.

Most comprehensive

The essays of these scientists were condensed into a 20-page summary by the panel before it was released to the press and policy makers.

At the launch on Friday, Michel Jarraud, secretary general of the World Meteorological Organization, said it was the "most rigorous and comprehensive assessment" of climate change ever produced.

The director of the UN Environment Program, Achim Steiner, said the report presented "unequivocal" evidence that human activity was linked to climate change. "The evidence is now on the table," he said.

Moment of shift

"Feb. 2 may be the day where the question mark was removed from behind the debate about whether human activity had anything to do with climate change. It's a milestone, and a moment of shift.

"Anyone who continues to risk inaction on the evidence presented will one day be considered irresponsible," Steiner said.

In an unprecedented consensus, 500 scientists and representatives of 130 governments on the panel agreed on the key statement, which describes how sure the scientists were about global warming being caused by man.

The report is believed to have delivered a crippling blow to the opinion of a shrinking group that claims that higher temperatures have been driven by natural causes. This now shifts the debate over climate change from scientific evidence to how the public and governments cope with the bleak forecasts of the report.

A 20-page summary of the report was supplied to policy makers.

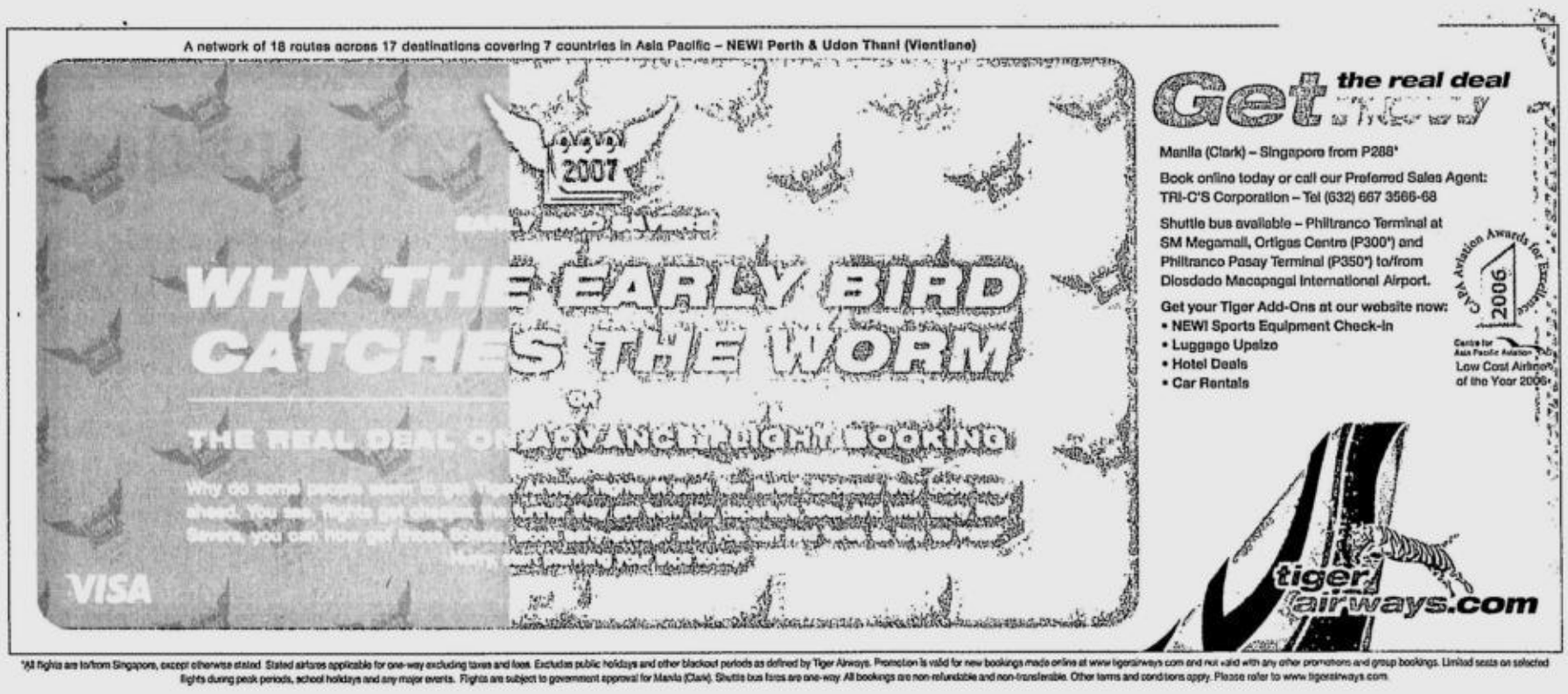
Highlights of the report

- "Global atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, [which] have increased markedly as a result of human activity, exceed pre-industrial values."

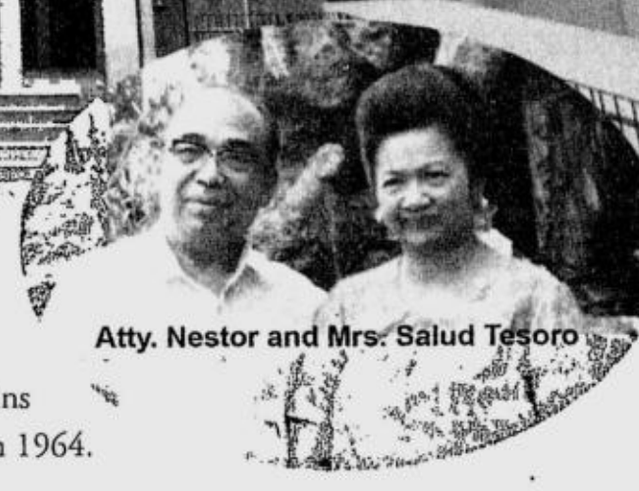
The global increases in carbon dioxide concentration "are due primarily to fossil fuel (mainly oil, coal and gas) and land-use change."

- "Warming of the climate system is unequivocal, as is now evident from observation of increases in global average and ocean temperatures, widespread melting of snow and ice, and rising mean sea level."
- Eleven of the last 12 years (1995-2006) ranks among the 12 warmest years in the record of global surface temperature (since 1850).
- The Earth's surface temperatures were predicted to rise between 1.8 and 4.0 Celsius and sea levels by 7.1 inches to 23.3 inches by 2100.
- Numerous long-term climate changes have been observed at continental, regional and ocean basin scales.
- Significantly increased precipitation has been observed in eastern parts of North and South America, northern Europe and northern central Asia. Drying has been observed in the Sahel, the Mediterranean, southern Africa and parts of southern Asia.
- More intense and longer droughts have been observed over wider areas since 1970, particularly in the tropics (where the Philippines is located) and sub-tropics. Increased drying linked with higher temperatures and decreased precipitation have contributed to changes in droughts.
- Widespread changes in extreme temperatures have been observed over the past 50 years. Cold days, cold nights and frost have become less frequent, while hot days, hot nights and heat waves have become more frequent.
- There has been an increase in the intensity of tropical cyclones in the North Atlantic since about 1970 as well as in some other regions. "It is very likely that hot extremes, heat waves and heavy precipitation events will continue to become more frequent," says the summary.
- Far from being alarmist, the report is couched in careful scientific language that is criticized by some quarters as too conservative and an understatement of the panel's case.

(The vulnerability of the Philippines to global warming will be examined in the next article.)



Tesoro's Group inaugurates 822 Paseo Tesoro


Atty. Nestor and Mrs. Salud Tesoro

More than sixty years ago, Atty. Nestor and Mrs. Salud Tesoro opened the first TESORO'S' EXCLUSIVE PHILIPPINE HANDICRAFTS store in Escolta, Manila in 1945. The six-storey building at A. Mabini, Ermita remains the flagship outlet and was inaugurated by President Diosdado Macapagal in 1964.

Pres. Diosdado Macapagal, First Lady Eva Macapagal, Mrs. Salud S. Tesoro, and Alice Tesoro-Guerrero at Tesoro's Mabini in 1964.

By 1972 the family spun off the business into several corporations collectively known as TESORO'S GROUP, a 100% family-owned and operated corporation. Today the GROUP CEO is Ma. Isabel "Beng" Tesoro. Tesoro's Retail is chaired by Alice Guerrero, Tesoro's Realty by Lulu Castañeda. Other involved siblings are Tito Tesoro, Mita Gutierrez, Bobby Tesoro, Dolly Tesoro and Dettie Carunungan.

Tesoro's Board of Directors, L- R: Atty. Lulu T. Castañeda, Beng Tesoro, Alice T. Guerrero, Dolly Tesoro, Atty. Tito Tesoro, Mita T. Gutierrez, Bobby Tesoro and Dettie T. Carunungan

On Tuesday, February 6, Tesoro's Realty Corp. will inaugurate a new three-storey arcade 822 Paseo Tesoro at 822 Arnaiz Avenue, designed by Jonathan Gan and Associates, constructed by Cardrian Builders and project management by Design XI. Special features of 822 Paseo Tesoro are open-frontage giving visibility to all tenants, elevator by Schindler, generator by Mikropower, glass curtain by Vittrade and basement parking.

Tesoro's, a trusted name since 1945, has diversified from retail to exports and real estate. Its other commercial properties are 1016 Arnaiz Ave., Casa Tesoro, the Nestor Bldg., the Salud Bldg and Tesoro's Mabini the main office. Tesoro's Stores has 9 branches in Metro Manila and Cebu and will open more outlets to serve its discriminating local and foreign clients who favor the best in Philippine handicrafts. Visit Tesoro's at 1325 A. Mabini, Ermita, Tesoro's Makati at 1016 Arnaiz Ave., at The LandMark Makati, Alabang Town Center, the Manila Hotel, Duty Free Phils. Fiesta Mall, NAIA Departure Lounge, SM-Cebu and Mactan-Cebu Int'l Airport.

To promote our national heritage, TESORO'S GROUP with the National Commission of Culture and the Arts, mounted the National Living Treasures Collection which was inaugurated by Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo last June 2006. The on-going exhibit at Tesoro's Mabini is open to the public free of charge.

The June 2006 ribbon cutting with Alice Tesoro-Guerrero, Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Director Felipe de Leon, Jr. of the NCCA.

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Doctors need healing, too, says leading Indian MD

By Volt Contreras

DR. ASHOK MEHTA, A LEADING Indian surgeon, is in the Philippines on a mission to remind health professionals that, sometimes, healers need healing too.

Using a module developed in the United Kingdom and dabbed with Eastern spiritual philosophy, Mehta will be facilitating a three-day workshop in Tagaytay City addressing "job burnout" in the medical profession and a doctor's core values.

"We are putting medication and meditation back together again," the doctor said in an interview last week in Manila, where he delivered a lecture under the auspices of Brahma Kumaris (BK), a spiritual organization active in the Philippines since 1983.

The Tagaytay seminar will be held starting today till Wednesday at the BK Center for Spiritual Learning, with some 45 participating health professionals from the government and private sector.

The program dubbed "Values in Healthcare: A Spiritual Approach (Vihasa)" is a brainchild of the Janki Foundation, a UK-based charity that focuses on spirituality and health, in cooperation with BK World Spirituality Philippine Foundation Inc.

Mehta, who is based in Mumbai and an eminent figure in various medical associations in India, is presently the foundation's scientific and medical advisor.

His call to "bring back the essence of our profession" may ring out like a challenge to the swelling ranks of Filipino doctors and nurses being lured to go abroad for higher pay, in turn bleeding the local medical service.

"More frustration comes to you if you start comparing yourself with other people," he remarked, when told that his seminar participants may include local health workers employed in poorly equipped public hospitals and whose chief source of job-related stress is their dissatisfaction with their pay checks.

"Don't consider yourself poor. Everything you do depends on how you look at it. Remember that each role we play is a hero's role. To give love you don't need a higher salary or higher technology," he stressed.

A surgical oncologist (specializing in tumors) for more than 35 years, Mehta noted how medical practice worldwide had either become so high-tech or so hectic that those sworn under the doctor's Hippocratic Oath "have lost something down the road."

"Doctors have been upgrading their skills but are forgetting the heart; we are getting the job done at the shortest possible time but increasingly without love, the basic quality of God," he said.

In a published essay explaining Vihasa, Mehta once lamented: "Despite improvement in disease management, there is a decline in a sense of purpose and general unhappiness among health professionals. This can have a harmful impact on the care of patients."

"Doctors in particular need to know how to care for themselves, because if they do not, they will not be able to give optimum care to their patients," he further wrote.

Physicians, especially if they had lost their patients, tend to very "self-critical" over the loss, he added. Daily exposure to other people's trauma can also be "emotionally exhausting."

"(This) can affect not only a doctor's judgment but perhaps his own faith in himself (as well as) the patient's own faith in his or her treatment."

Immigration posts highest revenue

THE BUREAU OF IMmigration posted its highest ever income in its 66 years in 2006, earning nearly P1.5 billion from fees and penalties imposed on aliens.

The bureau's earnings last year amounted to P1.468 billion, 31 percent more than its income in 2005, Immigration Commissioner Alipio Fernandez Jr. said in a statement.

The 2006 income also surpassed by 33 percent the bureau's revenue target of P1.104 billion for the year.

Fernandez said the 2006 income was the highest posted by the BI in its 66-year history.

"This is the very first time that we remitted a very large income to the national coffers and we are proud to have contributed our share toward improving our government's fiscal position," he said in a statement.

He said the increase could be attributed to the continuous arrival of foreigners in the country.

"It is also an indication that the foreigners are complying with our immigration laws and are paying the fees that they ought to pay in return for the privilege of staying here," he said.

The year 2006 was also the fifth time the bureau breached the P1-billion revenue mark, the first time being in 2002, according to BI finance chief Elvira Presado.

Presado said the bulk of the 2006 revenue—P1.04 billion—had come from the BI's main office in Intramuros, Manila. The rest came from the bureau's ports throughout the country.

The bureau recorded its highest monthly earning last year in January when it collected P135.59 million. This was followed by December and October, when the bureau posted revenues of P135.52 million and P132.4 million, respectively.

The BI had said earlier it would have earned more if not for the dual citizenship law, which allows former Filipinos who had become naturalized citizens of other countries to reacquire Philippine citizenship.

The dual citizens were also considered Filipino and thus exempt from immigration law requirements, including the payment of government fees.

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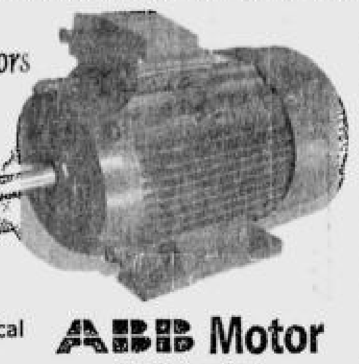

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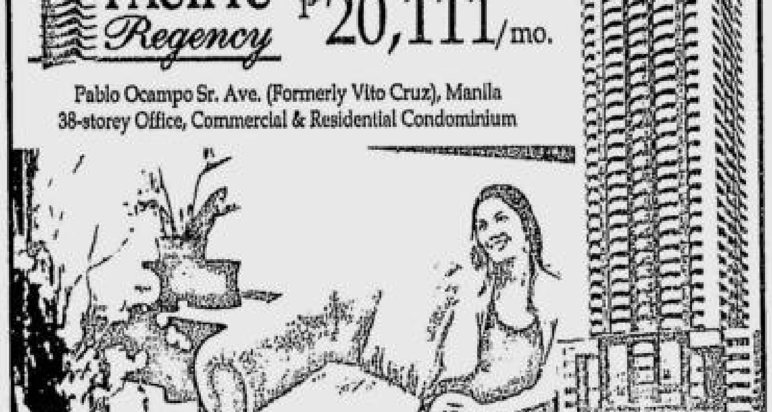

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2N Shenzhen + 1N Shanghai + 3N Beijing			369
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Kuala Lumpur 3N	155	Tri-City (Singapore/Malaysia/Indonesia) 4D/3N	235
Bangkok 3N	163	Jakarta 3N	248
Kuala+Genting Highlands 4D 3N	188	Singapore w/ Malaysia overland 6D/5N	383
1N HKG + 2N Shenzhen	178	3N Hongkong	248
2N HKG + 1N Shenzhen	208	1N HKG + 1N Macau + 2N Shenzhen	298
1N HKG + 2N Shenzhen + 2N SHA + 2N Beijing			428

HONGKONG DISNEYLAND

2N Hongkong w/ Disney Day Tour	199
3N Shanghai + 1N Shenzhen w/ Disney Day Tour	
1N Hongkong + 1N Disneyland	258
2N Hongkong + 1N Disneyland	278
1N Macau + 1N HKG + 1N Shenzhen w/ Disney Day Tour	279
1N Macau + 1N HKG + 2N Shenzhen w/ Disney Day Tour	299
February 18 departure	
1N Shenzhen + 3N SHA w/Disney day tour	
2N Shenzhen + 2N SHA w/Disney day tour	
2N Shenzhen + 3N SHA + 2N Beijing w/Disney day tour	399

Brunei free & easy 3D/2N 303 · 2N Bkk + 2N Brunei 5D/4N 333
4-City Singapore/Malaysia/Indonesia/Brunei 5D/4N 415

Saigon	3D/2N	209	Guam	3D/2N	353
Macau	4D/3N	238	Palau	3D/2N	379
Taipei	3D/2N	338	Sydney	4D/3N	730
Holy Land				9D/8N	1650
Wonders of Egypt				9D/8N	1780
Magic of Turkey				12D/11N	1863
European Encounter				14D/13N	1998

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2N Shenzhen 1N Macau w/ Disney Day Tour 229
1N Shenzhen 3N Hongkong 1N Macau 189
2N Shenzhen 2N Shanghai 2N Beijing 369
1N Macau 1N Hongkong 1N Shenzhen 209
2N Hongkong 1N Shenzhen 199
2N Hongkong 1N Shenzhen w/ Disney 259
3N Shanghai 2N Shenzhen w/ Disney Day Tour 199

Disneyland Day Tour Family Package (3D)	239	Disneyland Overnight Family Package (3D)	302
Disneyland Day Tour Family Package (4D)	259	Disneyland Overnight Family Package (4D)	323

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1N HKG+2N SHEN w/ DISNEY DAY TOUR $ 109/129
4nites SHENZHEN · 2N SHEN+1N MACAU · 3D/2N HONGKONG FREE & EASY · NCLEX HONGKONG · HONGKONG · HONGKONG · 1N HONGKONG+2N SHENZHEN · 1N HKG+2N SHEN
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BANGKOK +PATTAYA $228	KUALA LUMPUR $155	KUALA+GENTING $208	SINGAPORE $189	SINGAPORE+MALAY+INDO $238
SINGAPORE +KUALA $328	SAIGON $199	SAIGON +CAMBODIA $298	JAKARTA $228	GUAM $358
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CEBU	P3870
DAVAO	P4488
PALAWAN	P4098
BOHOL	P4498
BANAWE+SAGADA	P4998

BUDGET FARES

LAX/SFO	$558
SEATTLE	$698
HONOLULU	$639
CHICAGO/JFK/DALLAS FW	$658
SYD/MEL BNE	$518
VANCOUVER	$638
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Little Known Facts

about Adamson University, Higher Education's *Best Kept Secret*

1)Adamson is a Catholic University. It has been so since 1964 when the Congregation of the Mission, better known as the Vincentians, took over ownership and direction of the school from the founder George Lucas Adamson. The Vincentians are also behind three of the largest Catholic universities in the U.S., namely: De Paul University in Chicago, St. John's University in New York, and Niagara University.

2)The Adamson main building formerly housed the San Carlos Seminary of the Archdiocese of Manila. Before the seminary moved to its current site in Guadalupe, Makati, this was where nearly all the priests in Manila went to school for their vocations, and the Vincentians were their teachers. It was also the Central House of the Vincentian order then. Adamson first leased the building after the war which severely damaged their former campus in Intramuros. The parish church beside it, more popularly known as San Marcelino, is in fact the church of St. Vincent de Paul.

3)Adamson is not only an Engineering school. Established in 1932 as the Adamson School of Industrial Chemistry, it soon became a name to reckon with in Chemistry and a host of engineering majors. But in a few years it also began to offer Law with no less than soon-to-become President Elpidio Quirino as its first dean. Today, Adamson has ten colleges and 50 varied courses. It even has a school of Theology and Nursing.

4)Adamson is an inexpensive school. The mandate of the school under the Vincentians is quality education for the socially disadvantaged. As such, tuition fees are lower in comparison to that of other private Catholic institutions. Even during the time when George Lucas Adamson headed the school, the thrust was "maximum practical education in the minimum amount of time."

5)Adamson is accessible from major transport routes. Adamson is one of the few schools that benefits from the convenience and efficiency of Metro Manila's light railway transport network. LRT1 U.N. station is a short distance from an exclusive covered walkway that takes you directly to the Adamson campus. This means that whether coming from either end terminals in Monumento or Baclaran, and the connecting points of the EDSA MRT and LRT2 which reaches Marikina and Pasig, students are only minutes away. Bus lines connect it directly to Quiapo, Pandacan, and Sta. Ana, and even to as far east of Manila as Taytay, Rizal.

Adamson 75

Two streams of tradition mark Adamson University's journey of 75 years.

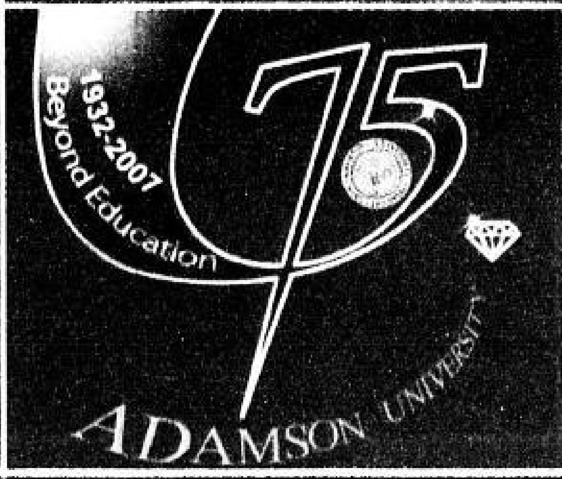
On the one hand is the legacy of applied technical and academic excellence for nation-building as fostered from the very start by its original Greek founders; on the other is the avowed mission of compassionate service most especially to the poor and socially disadvantaged, the living legacy of St. Vincent de Paul, patron and founder of the Congregation of the Mission, who took over stewardship of the University in 1964.

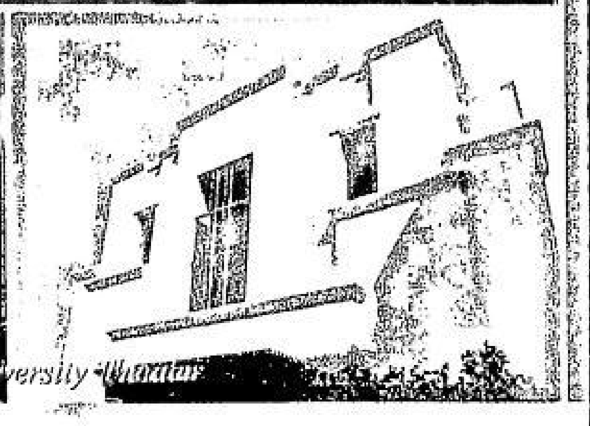
As we celebrate our 75th Jubilee, Adamson affirms its commitment to these lasting legacies and, with renewed vigor, push forward more avenues whereby these two streams shall continue to inform and infuse one another towards our vision of a truly Catholic quality education for the underprivileged sectors of society.

Adamson is clear about its mission and its public. A great majority of our students are ordinary people—the working class, the grassroots, the marginalized. But we are of firm belief and faith that these individuals are capable of extraordinary lives and success. And it is our mandate as educators to help shape and form them to become agents of change and social transformation. The roster of 75 Outstanding Jubilee Alumni are a living testimony to this. Most of them may not be as prominent as one would expect of achievers. They are mostly simple, hardworking, and dedicated individuals who somehow made a difference for the common good.

St. Vincent de Paul is considered the patron of all charitable institutions. His whole life was in service of the poor sectors of society. But he was not one who forever went about with a begging bowl nor was he a firebrand who lashed out at the elite of his time to blame them for the miserable conditions of the poor. Instead, he motivated and organized the rich to assist in his efforts. What he has done could serve as a model of collaboration, capacity-building and solidarity—things most vital in the fight against poverty.

We look to the future as an open horizon full of possibilities. The greater task is to harness our rich tradition and history, and all our strengths to relentlessly pursue our vision. In the words of St. Vincent: "What God has done for us in the past is so great that we can look to the future with faith and confidence."





Adamson University Theater

75 Alumni Awardees

Awardees	Course	Year
1. Agustin Advincula	AB Philo	1976
2. Eduardo A[illegible]	BS Arch	1975
3. Manny A. A[illegible]	AB Philo	1977
4. Fernando A[illegible]	BS Min. Eng'g	1978
5. Reynaldo R. A[illegible]	BSEE	1983
6. Ruth Lane Uy Asmundson	BS Chem	1964
7. Edison T. A[illegible]	BS Chem	1966
8. Eduardo B. B[illegible]	BSIE	1969
9. Belmar S. B[illegible]	BSIE	1982
10. Teodorica Leaño-B[illegible]	BS ChE	1974
11. Nelia Bandilla-B[illegible]	HS	1985
12. Julian G. Camacho	BS Mgt	1970
13. Norberto L. C[illegible]	AB Philo	1979
14. Cornelio Q. C[illegible]	BS Min. Eng'g	1974
15. Lydia G. Crisostomo	BS Chem	1950
16. Gil N. C[illegible]	BSIE	1982
17. Alexander P. C[illegible]	BS CE	1984
18. Rolando T. De Leon	BSIE	1985
19. Andrew S. De Real	BSC	1961
20. Chito G. Delos Santos	Laws	1994
21. Regidor A. D[illegible]	BS ChE	1977
22. Abelardo T. D[illegible]	[illegible]	1985
23. John Wesley A. D[illegible]	BS Bio	1988
24. Marilou Magno-D[illegible]	BS CE	1977
25. Carlos R. D[illegible] III	BS Arch	1987
26. Lucina P. G[illegible]	PhD Mgt	1996
27. Mario V. G[illegible]	BSCE	1984
28. Leonardo M. G[illegible]	BS ChE	1950
29. Angelino C. G[illegible]	BS ChE	1976
30. Solomon M. H[illegible]	AB PolSci	1982
31. Marietta A[illegible]	BS Chem	1975
32. Marvin M. [illegible]	BS Psych	1989
33. Carmen Zita-Lamagna	BS ChE	1978
34. Romeo L. L[illegible]	AB Mass Comm	1997
35. Benjamin S. Lim	BSIE	1975
36. Enrique C. Lim	BS Chem	1959
37. Efren R. Lopez	BS Arch	1977
38. Nelson A. L[illegible]	Laws	1970
39. Romeo C. Macaraeg	AB PolSci	1963
40. Ma. Isabel T. M[illegible]	HS	1975
41. Josefina T. M[illegible]	BS Elem Ed	1976
42. Eric B. M[illegible]	BSIE	1972
43. [illegible] C. M[illegible]	BSCE	1978
44. Florendo G. Maranan	BSIE	1980
45. [illegible]	BS ChE	1976
46. Marlo D. N[illegible]	BSC	1976
47. Angelito A. N[illegible]	HS	1988
48. Rafael V. Nepomuceno	BSC	1979
49. Lilian O. Ocampo	BS ChE	1978
50. Bernardino C. Pa[illegible]	BS Chem	1969
51. Francisco Recto Q. Patron	BS IE	1983
52. Marilyn Abadilla-Perez	BS ChE	1978
53. [illegible] Phongpinyo	PhD Educ	2001
54. Jose F. Rafols, Jr.	BSIE	1964
55. Rosie Rufo-Robrigado	BS Chem	1967
56. Noel E. Rosal	BSIE	1985
57. Mario C. Royena	AB Psych	1973
58. Pedro B. Rovillos, Jr.	BS Geo	1976
59. Diego C. Rubio, Jr.	BS ChE	1963
60. Robert S. Sac	BS Arch	1977
61. Reynaldo C. Sagum	BSCE	1980
62. Teresita Ramirez-Sanchez	Laws	1990
63. Ronell B. Santos	AB Philo	1982
64. Renato C. Sio	BS ChE	1971
65. Jaturong Siripanichgon	PhD Mgt	2002
66. Fernando Suarez	BS ChE	1988
67. Lourdes Dacumos-Supetran	BS Chem	1970
68. Mariano B. Tachas	BS ChE	1978
69. Ronaldo A. Tan	PhD Educ	2001
70. Eladio M. Tinio	BS Pharmacy	1954
71. Edgardo J.T. Tirona	AB Eco	1975
72. Anacleta Pring-Valdez	HS	1979
73. Rechilda Perez-Villame	BS ChE	1976
74. Rodel M. Visconde	BS Pharm	1988
75. Manuel L. Wong	BS ChE	1983

Three Adamsonians. Three different parts of the world. One passion: to serve.

Dr Ruth Uy Asmundson, Ph.D

An alumna of Adamson University with a BS in Chemistry (1964), Mayor Ruth Asmundson of Davis City California was selected by The Commission on Filipino Overseas as one of the recipients of the Pamana ng Pilipino Award in 2006 for excellence in work, untiring service to the Filipino people, and dedicated leadership in community initiatives that promote the common good.

Fr. Agustin " Gestie" Advincula, CM

Father Gestie Advincula, CM is an AB Philosophy graduate (1976). He was given a citation by Malacañang for the invaluable help he extended to Overseas Filipino Workers in war-torn Lebanon.

Dr. Carmen Zita-Lamagna, Ph.D

Dr. Carmen Zita-Lamagna serves as the vice-chancellor of the American International University in Bangladesh, one of the largest institutions in that country. Also cited for her commendable achievement by Malacañang. Dr. Lamagna continues to educate young minds. She is a BS Chemical Engineering graduate (1978).

(Ruth Asmundson: U.S.A. Fr. Gestie Advincula: Lebanon Carmen Zita-Lamagna: Bangladesh)

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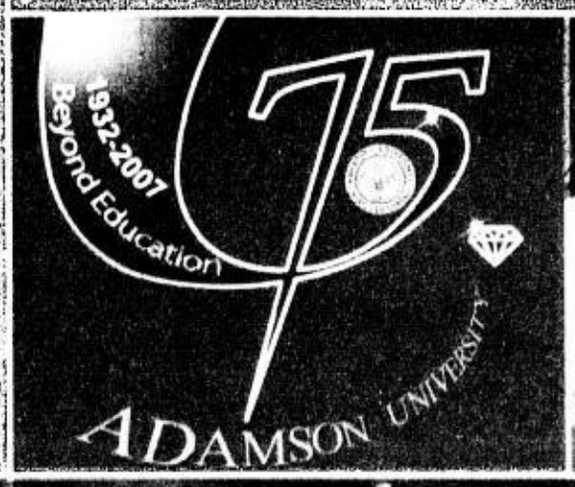
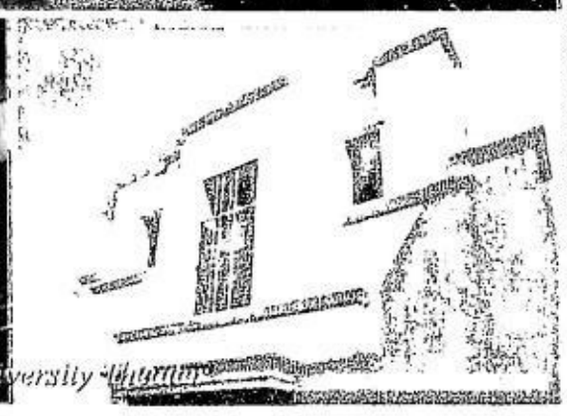
Little Known Facts about Adamson University, Higher Education's Best Kept Secret





ADAMSON

75 Alumni Awardees

Three Adamsonians. Three different parts of the world. One passion to serve.

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ADAMSON UNIVERSITY

BEYOND EDUCATION

What distinguishes Adamson University from other schools today is its avowed vision-mission of offering affordable quality education particularly to the socially disadvantaged. That it has succeeded in this regard is attested to by alumni homecomings punctuated with tales of struggling schooldays that led to a better post-graduation life.

The Adamson School of Industrial Chemistry was founded in 1932 by three Greek nationals. It grew through the years, moving from Sta. Cruz to Gen. Solano St. to Intramuros. When it became a university in 1933, it was offering Engineering, Architecture, Education, Liberal Arts, Pharmacy, Commerce, Law, and Elementary and High School.

Closed during World War II, it reopened at the St. Vincent building along San Marcelino St. in 1946. But in 1964, the Greek founders, after 32 very productive years, handed ownership of the university to the Vincentians - priests and brothers of the Congregation of the Mission (C.M.) - making the school a Catholic Vincentian institution. The Vincentians' mission to serve the poor shaped the school's vision-mission. Named after their founder St. Vincent de Paul, they are now on their 72nd year of service to the university.

Under them, the school reached new heights. It became recognized internationally as a Catholic institution through membership in the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). Also, it became a member of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) and co-founded the Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines (ACUP).

The university also acquired new property. Just seven years after it moved to the Gregorio Araneta Avenue campus in 1952, it bought the Meralco building (1959) and the Holy Ghost campus of St. Theresa's College-Manila (now, in 1972, the Ozanam building was constructed to house the College of Engineering on a lot bought from the Tabacalera company.

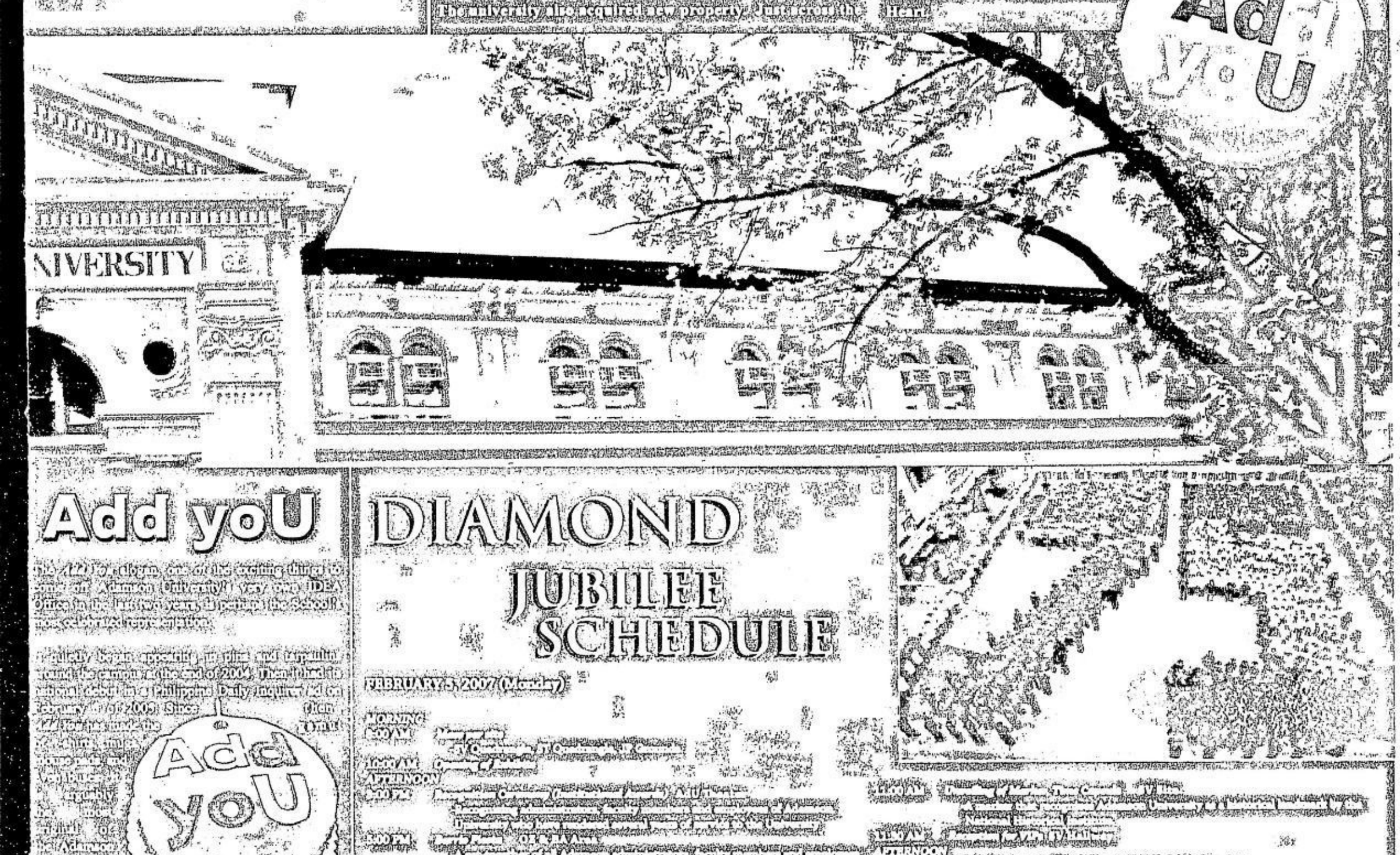
There was a steady stream of enrollees so that by the '90s enrolment peaked at 21,994, big enough for Adamson to justifiably claim the credit of being the largest technological university at that time. More courses on the up were opened as the enrolment increased. Just recently, courses in the field of Information Technology and Health Care (Nursing and Health Care Services) and in Customs Administration have been added. New majors include Food Technology and Nutrition and Dietetic under the BS Chemistry program.

At present, Adamson University has twelve colleges offering 45 academic programs. In the last five years, it has reached Level II accreditation for its courses in Engineering and Liberal Arts and Level III accreditation for Business Administration from organizations like the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) and the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

Adamson University is run through a non-stock, non-profit corporation called the Adamson Education Foundation, Inc.

The story of Adamson University is the confluence of two streams: the Greek and the Vincentian - into one river of education that is enriched by excellence and service.

Today, the university community offers a new "Education with Heart."



Add yoU

The "Add yoU" slogan, one of the exciting things to come out of Adamson University's very own IDEA office in the past two years, is perhaps the school's most celebrated expression.

Boldly bannered especially in time and keyed with sound bites at the end of 2004, then launched in a blaze of debut in a Philippine Daily Inquirer ad on February 7, 2005. Since then "Add yoU" has found its way into the hearts and minds of the Adamson community, and has become a household word.

"Add yoU" is a dare, a challenge, a call to action. It is a rallying cry for Adamson students, faculty, staff, and alumni to go beyond the ordinary and to do extraordinary things in the service of others.

"Add yoU" is a call to action for Adamson students to add value to their lives by getting involved in activities that will help them develop their full potential as persons and as leaders.

"Add yoU" is a challenge for Adamson faculty and staff to add value to the lives of their students by providing them with the best learning experience possible.

"Add yoU" is a dare for Adamson alumni to add value to the lives of others by sharing their success stories and their blessings.

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DIAMOND JUBILEE SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 5, 2007 (Monday)

MORNING
9:00 AM
10:00 AM
AFTERNOON
2:00 PM
3:00 PM

FEBRUARY 6, 2007 (Tuesday)

FEBRUARY 7, 2007 (Wednesday)

MORNING
9:00 AM
10:00 AM

1932 up to the present.

AFTERNOON
5:00 PM *Homeric Cause* AdU Theater
-Conferment of degree to the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission, Pr. G. Gregory Gay, C.M.

EVENING
6:00 PM *Dinner* ST Quad
-Dinner of guests, administrators and selected faculty members.
7:00 PM *Fireworks Display* Estero Site

FEBRUARY 8, 2007 (Thursday)

MORNING
8:00 AM *Field Demonstration (PE students)* SV Quad
10:00 AM *Jubilee Mass (Cardinal Rosales)* SVP Church

FEBRUARY 9, 2007 (Friday)

MORNING
9:00 AM
10:00 AM
AFTERNOON
2:00 PM
3:00 PM

AdU Theater

FEBRUARY 10, 2007 (Saturday)

MORNING
7:00 AM *Parade and Review* SV Quad
AFTERNOON
4:00 PM *Grand Alumni Homecoming* SV Grounds

FEBRUARY 11, 2007 (Sunday)

EVENING
7:00 PM *Lea Salonga Concert* PICC

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ADAMSON UNIVERSITY

BEYOND EDUCATION

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Closed during World War II, it reopened at the St. Vincent building along San Marcelino St. in 1946. But the Greek founders, after 32 very productive years, handed over ownership of the university to the Vincentians, private religious of the Congregation of the Mission (C.M.), international Catholic Vincentian institution. The Vincentians' dedication to serve the poor shaped the school's direction, following their founder St. Vincent de Paul's motto of love in action and zeal for service to humanity.

Under them, the school reached new heights. It became recognized internationally as a Catholic institution through membership in the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU). Also, it became a member of the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP). It is also linked thru Association of Catholic Universities of the Philippines (ACUP).

The university also acquired new property, like across the street it bought the Meralco Building (1968) and the whole campus of St. Therese's College, Manila (Santelle, 1978), the Ozanam building was constructed to house the College of Engineering on a lot bought from the Tibiao's company.

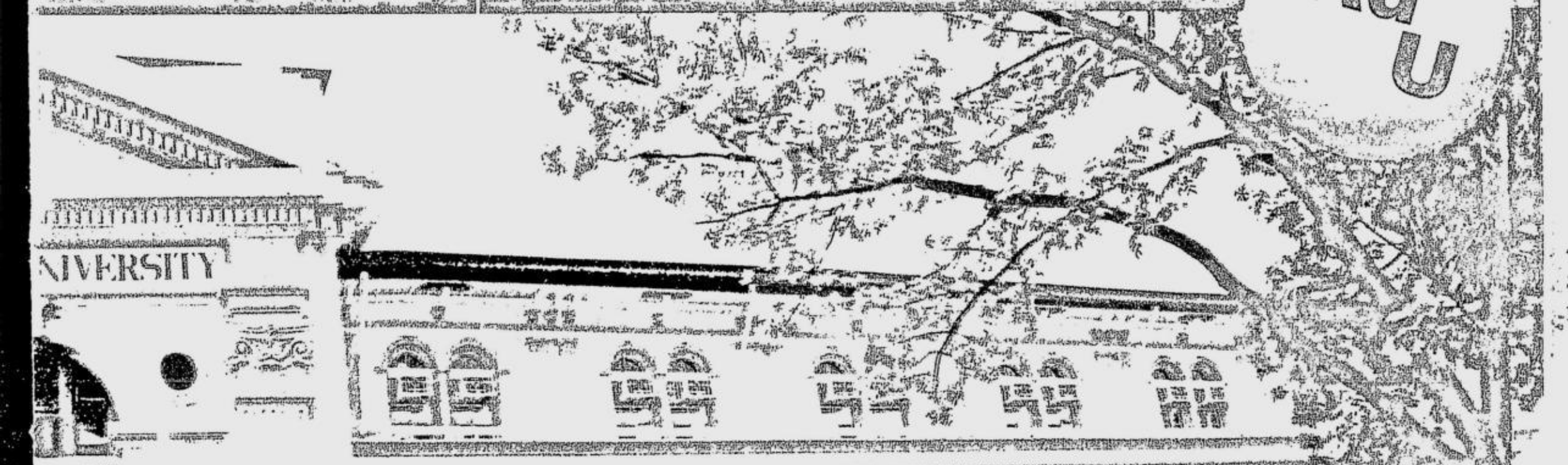
There was a steady stream of enrollees so that by the '90s enrolment peaked at 21,994, big enough for Adamson to justifiably claim the credit of being the largest technological university at that time. More courses/degrees were opened as the enrolment increased. Different courses in the field of Information Technology and Health Care (Nursing and its mother Caregiver course) and in Customs Administration (BSCA) were added. New majors include Food Technology and Nutrition and Dietetics under the B.S. Chemistry program.

At present, Adamson University has ten colleges offering 45 academic programs. In the last year, it acquired Level III accreditation for its courses in Engineering and Liberal Arts and Level III accreditation for Business Administration from organizations like the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) and the Philippine Association of Colleges and Universities Commission on Accreditation (PACUCOA).

Adamson University is run through a non-stock, non-profit corporation called the Adamson-Ozanam Educational Institutions, Inc.

The story of Adamson University is the confluence of two streams, the Greeks and the Vincentians, into one river education that is highlighted by excellence.

Today, the university is formally offering [illegible] with Heart.



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DIAMOND JUBILEE SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 5, 2007 (Monday)

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AFTERNOON
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FEBRUARY 6, 2007 (Tuesday)

FEBRUARY 7, 2007 (Wednesday)

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FEBRUARY 8, 2007 (Thursday)

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FEBRUARY 9, 2007 (Friday)

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FEBRUARY 10, 2007 (Saturday)

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FEBRUARY 11, 2007 (Sunday)

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[illegible] beginning [illegible] and [illegible] end of 2004. The [illegible] Philippine Daily Inquirer [illegible] on [illegible] 100 [illegible] Since [illegible] born [illegible]

Add yoU

[illegible] the Adamson community.

[illegible] and [illegible] only on Adamson University [illegible] Add yoU [illegible] to [illegible] add yourselves in this wonderful experience called life rather than remain passive bystanders who [illegible] look on. *Add You* tells us to jump in, get involved, get your feet wet and bring about the changes needed to make the University, our society, and ultimately life [illegible] we want them to be.

[illegible] you're known when you finally become [illegible] well, at least that's how the realization came to [illegible] Adamson's most famous emblem has reached [illegible] status. Barely two years old, the "Add YOU" [illegible] joined the [illegible] and more [illegible] in [illegible] birthday [illegible] made by Manila City [illegible]

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San Marcelino Branch
PNB
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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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What can be done

WE SAID IT LAST WEEK; WE'LL SAY IT AGAIN. The participation of the international community in government probes into the continuing series of extrajudicial killings is the best guarantee that the killings will stop. Or, at least, that we will finally know, beyond any doubt, who is behind them.

EDITORIAL

If the price President Macapagal-Arroyo had to pay for her high-powered meetings in Davos, Switzerland was to listen again and again to international businessmen expressing serious concern about the killings, then her expensive trip was worth it.

When she came back from the World Economic Forum, she devoted a good part of her speech at the traditional New Year's toast that Malacañang hosts for the diplomatic corps to the issue of the unsolved killings. To be sure, she did not exactly welcome the conclusion of the Melo fact-finding commission she had formed, which said that "elements of the military" were behind the killings. But she did invite the international community—in particular representatives of the European Union—to help the commission.

We are happy that the Papal Nuncio and the American ambassador have added their voice to the chorus of concern. We do not see their remarks as an affront to our sovereignty or as meddling in our internal affairs; human rights have a universal constituency. (For the same reason, we have time and again taken the Bush administration to task for its unconscionable handling of detained suspects in Guantanamo.)

None of this is to say, however, that foreign participation is the only guarantee; nothing prevents the Arroyo administration, by itself, from putting an end to the scourge of killings.

It can, for instance, do the following:

First, it makes the Melo Commission report public. (Indeed, it is only a matter of time before someone does; if the administration is beaten to the punch, it will again take a beating in public opinion. This may not necessarily be of any moment to an administration already accustomed to dismal public ratings, but it should give pause to a leadership busy courting international approbation.)

Second, it forces the Philippine National Police to solve a landmark number of cases, before the campaign season starts in earnest. The President has sought to contextualize the killings as political violence; we can quibble with this redefinition, but the May elections should give her the opportunity to claim bragging rights. "We will do everything in our power to crack down on political violence leading up to this May elections," she told the diplomatic corps last week. Let her lay the groundwork to make such a claim; that attempt will save many lives.

Third, the Arroyo administration redefines what it means to solve a crime: no longer simply the filing of a case (however weak or makeshift), but the actual incarceration of the suspects. The first is a bureaucratic dodge, which does not solve anything; the second is a tougher but more realistic standard.

Fourth, it forces retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan to give an accounting of his actuations when he was still in the service. As the commission noted, Palparan had admitted in a moment of candor that he may have inspired some of the killings. This is an explanation that does not explain enough, that begs to be pursued. If the President's favorite ex-general has truly nothing to hide, what's to prevent her from convincing him to explain himself, in full?

Fifth, the administration broadcasts the message to all and sundry: It will throw the book at any soldier involved in any of the killings, even if it were done while "off-duty" or off-base. In particular, the President must convince AFP Chief of Staff Hermogenes Esperon to stop making excuses for his men and instead root out the political killers in the military with the same zeal he has shown in eliminating restiveness in the ranks.

The to-do list is clear and uncluttered. The only question is, does the President have the will and the discipline to check those must items off her list?

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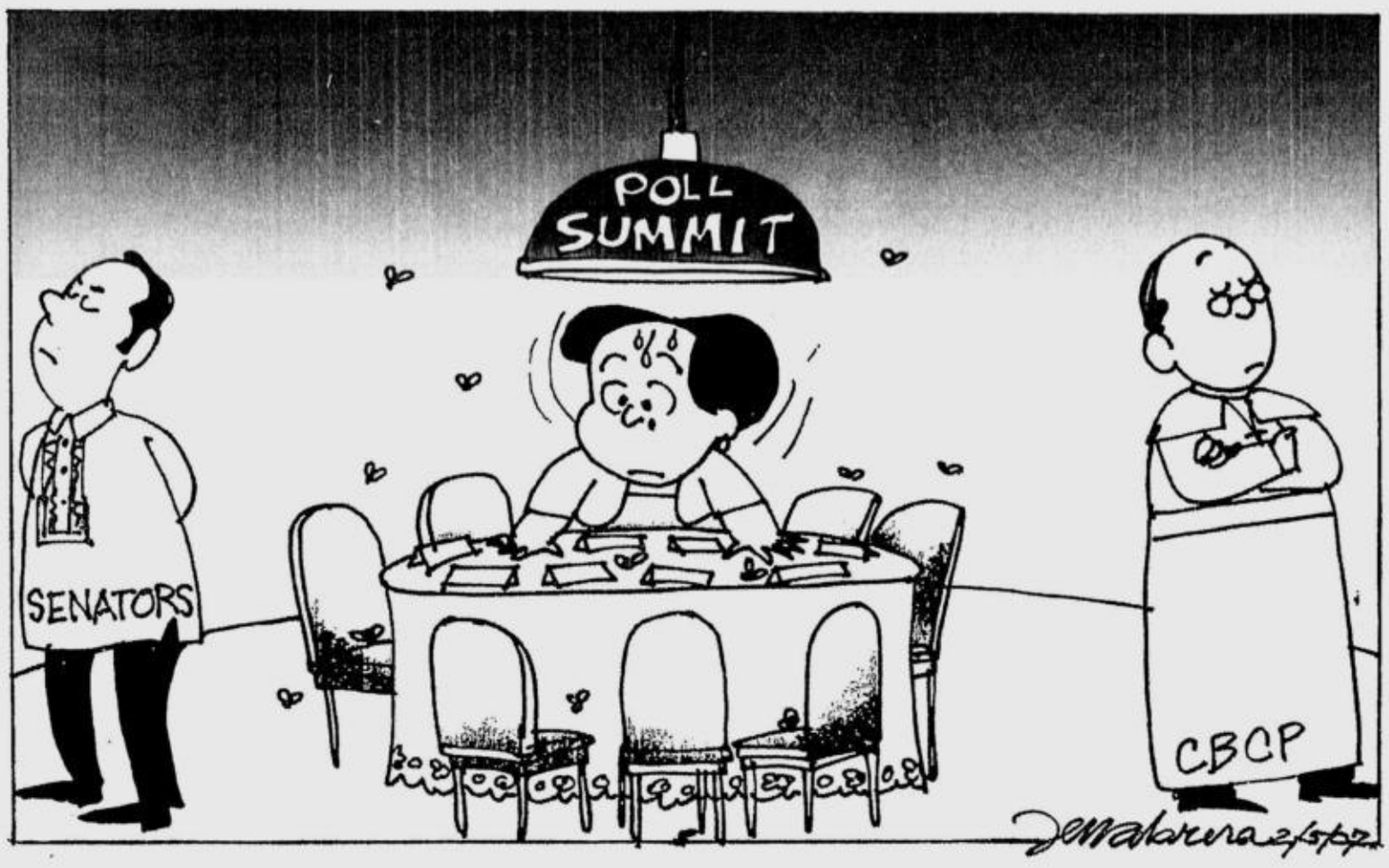

Public schools used to be better than private schools

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

THE CURRENT HABIT OF COMPARING THE performances of public school students with those attending private schools, and the two-part series by Queena N. Lee-Chua expressing surprise that a couple of outstanding students at the Ateneo de Manila University came from public schools and not from private schools, made me look back to my primary and elementary school days. The present situation, where private school students usually perform better, has not always been like that. In the old days, it was the other way around: public school students were better.

I studied in public schools in Malabon during my primary, elementary and early high school. There were several private schools in Malabon at that time but we laughed at those who went there. We considered them "*bobo*": they were in private schools only because they were not admitted to public schools "for not making the grade." All the bright students went to public schools. Why a private school when the public school was free and had a better reputation? Those in private schools went there by force of circumstance.

The reason public schools were better then was the teachers. They were more dedicated and hard working. For the first four grade levels, I went to the Tonsuya Barrio School, a five-room wooden schoolhouse (the fifth room was the principal's office). The teachers in the first two grades were only Grade 6 graduates who were taught how to teach. And how they learned. They were very good. They motivated their pupils to excel. For example, when a Grade 1 pupil was able to answer correctly a particularly hard question, the teacher would pick him up and parade him around the room and tell the other pupils to clap their hands. That really motivated the pupils (me, for example) to study, hoping to be paraded around next time.

Then there were the prizes frequently awarded to those who performed well in tests and recitations. The gifts were not expensive, just cheap medals or religious pins, or framed religious pictures. But how proud we were to bring those prizes home and how proud our parents were to show them to neighbors. Parents were invited to the school for a talk with the teachers when their children were performing poorly or well.

When I graduated from the primary school, I transferred to the Malabon Elementary School in Hulo, which is across the river on the other side of town. To get there, we either had to take a *karetela* or walk. We walked to save our transportation allowance for lunch. It was a long walk, five kilometers each way, but it wasn't tiring because there were plenty of us children walking. Children from our barrio had to walk a longer way because we first had to walk a kilometer or so to the bridge which we had to cross to reach the main road leading to the school.

But there was a shorter way—across the river, by banca. We would walk across fishpond dikes in our barrio to reach the river where there usually was a banca ferrying passengers, back and forth, for a few centavos. On the other side, we walked across more fishpond dikes, through some backyards, and then to the main street only a short distance from the school.

On the way to school, we would pass two private schools. The public school students were so arrogant at that time that we would jeer at the private school students whom we knew. The latter developed a kind of inferiority complex, such that they couldn't look at us straight in the face. We would ask some of our playmates why they were studying in a private school, and they would shamefacedly answer, "*Hindi ako matanggap sa public school, eh* (I can't be admitted to a public school)."

That changed during the war and after Liberation. Many students didn't go to school during the three-year Japanese occupation. They didn't want to study Nippongo and many believed that the schooling during the Japanese occupation wouldn't be recognized by the Americans when they returned.

After the Liberation, most of the public schools were destroyed. Those that were not had no desks. They were either commandeered or used for firewood.

I went to Caloocan High School (the former Cecilio Apostol Elementary School) beside the runway of the Feati airline, and each of us students had to bring our own chair or stool.

The students from the city were a tough bunch. They banded together and made a game of bullying students from the provinces. I fell in with a tough gang, two members of whom even brought pistols to school. There were frequent fights, outside and inside classrooms, and the stools became handy for bashing heads.

The next year, we were told to leave the Cecilio Apostol building and transfer to the Philippine National Railroad cottages in a compound beside the railroad tracks. Again, we had to bring our own chairs and stools there. I think this was the time when public schools began to lose their quality and the private schools started to catch up.

I was becoming a hooligan at Caloocan High, so my father transferred me to St. James Academy in Malabon, a Catholic school run by the Maryknoll sisters. At first, I didn't want to go to a private school, remembering how we made fun of students going to private schools. But St. James was a very good school and I was fortunate to have excellent Maryknoll sisters as teachers. They really motivated their students to perform well.

And the public vs. private school situation has been that way ever since.

Pandora's box

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

FE DOLOT, PRESIDENT OF THE LEGAZPI City Public School Teachers and Employees Association, had an urgent letter to the editor last Friday. In her letter, Dolot attests to the genuineness of the vote count in Legazpi after the May 2004 polls. In that count, Noel Rosal won as mayor with 44,792 votes while his nearest rival, Michael Imperial, lost with 33,747 votes. Rosal is currently the mayor of Legazpi.

What compelled Dolot and her group to write that letter is that Rosal's legitimacy has been challenged by Imperial and has been upheld by the Comelec's Second Division and then by the Comelec en banc. The case is now pending before the Supreme Court.

What happened was this: After the May 2004 elections, the counting of the votes for mayor was done in full view of the public and duly signed by the teachers. The count produced the results above. No one complained about any irregularity in the counting. No one among the watchers, including the representatives of the candidates, said the teachers called out the wrong names from the ballot forms. The counting was clearly, transparently, unassailably aboveboard.

Now comes the curious part. When the ballot boxes got to the Comelec, Imperial challenged the count, claiming that many of the ballots were fake. When the Comelec Second Division opened the boxes, lo and behold, its members did in fact find a host of fake ballots. How in God's, or Beelzebub's, name those things got in there, only they know. The public school teachers at least are absolutely certain the fake ballots were not there when they turned the ballot boxes over to the Comelec. They know that for a fact because all the ballot boxes bore their signatures certifying them to be authentic. The fake ballot boxes the Comelec "discovered" in their premises did not carry those signatures.

And still comes the curiouser, or more ingeniously devious, part. The fake ballot boxes did not contain votes for Imperial, they contained votes for Rosal! So, putting on the face of stern benignity, the Comelec Second Division and en banc, in sync ruled to blot out the obscenity—the fake ballots—from the face of the earth. And, lo and behold, Rosal ended up with 30,517 votes and Imperial with 32,660 votes. Ergo, by the Comelec's reckoning, Imperial is the rightful mayor of Legazpi City, a matter the commissioners have now laid out before Solomon, also called the Supreme Court, to adjudicate. Ah, but truly, they add whole new meanings to the word "commissioner."

Dolot laments in her letter: "The ballots that were counted by the division were obviously tampered with as they did not bear our real signatures as members of the BEI. This prompted us to file an affidavit with the Comelec Second Division questioning the spurious signatures on the documents, but it never gave us, some 110 teachers, a chance to be heard."

I can understand the teachers' wrath. The Comelec's decision to uphold Imperial's challenge makes them out to be either incompetent or crooked. Either they are too stupid to allow such humongous wrongdoing to get past them or they are too bright to improve their plight by selling principle. Public school teachers in this country have nothing in life but their good name. To have that taken from them too, they have every right to go to war, or write letters to the editor, whichever delivers them first.

But Jesus Christ, between the public school teachers who counted the votes before the burning gaze of the voters of Legazpi and Benjamin Abalos' cohorts who unearthed the fake ballot boxes amid the shadows of their tomb, beyond the gaze of human eye, whom will you believe? That's a no-brainer.

Seemingly a local issue that affects only local politics, it is in fact a matter of life and death, and one that should transfix our gaze. Two things particularly make it infuriating.

The first is: Why is it so easy for the Comelec (or indeed Congress) to discover machination in vote counts whose honesty the teachers themselves swear to upon their children's lives, while they find it next to impossible to espy any ghost of wrongdoing in vote counts whose rottenness everyone, from priest to general, from God to Gudani, is loudly condemning?

The second is that it makes a mockery of elections. In the same page where Dolot's letter came out last Friday was another letter by a Rudy Coronel that bitterly, and completely rightly, protested the firing of elected officials by the Ombudsman. It was a good reminder that in this country it is not enough to win elections to hold office. You have to snarl and claw as well throughout your term to fend off enemies who mean to grab your office by hook or by crook. Ronaldo Puno's dismissal of officials he does not like is horrendous enough as it is, and I myself cannot understand why we, the public, have not gone to the streets to exorcise that deviltry. That is an ice pick shoved into the heart of democracy. Henceforth, elected local officials may exist only at the sufferance of one of the most insidious and obnoxious characters to crawl out of this planet.

The Rosal-Imperial case pours gasoline into that fire. Henceforth, the ultimate arbiter of who should govern this country is not the Filipino Voter, it is the Alien Comelec. Forget campaigning among your constituents, just remember to campaign among the commissioners. Forget the voters' votes, just remember the commissioners' commissions.

Rosal is removed from office by this act of malice and maliciousness, elections become nothing more than a costly exercise in self-flagellation. The boxes from Legazpi that the Comelec Second Division opened were not just ballot boxes that contained fake ballots, they were a Pandora's box that unleashed an army of evil upon this land.

They get away with this, heaven help us.

An afternoon at Holy Angel University

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

HOW IMPORTANT ARE PRIVATE SCHOOLS TO the life and progress of the nation? I am not referring to what are sometimes called "elite schools," which are generally affordable only to the relatively wealthy. I am rather referring to colleges and universities (especially in the provinces)—schools which are within the reach of the middle class or even poorer Filipinos.

The incoming president of the Holy Angel University, Dr. Arlyn Sicangco-Villanueva, DBA, who was installed as the institution's eighth president, answered my question in an eloquently convincing and warm manner.

But first, what was I doing in Holy Angel U? The simple but fortuitous answer is: its new president happens to be the spouse of my boss, Dean Cesar Villanueva of the Ateneo Law School and the mother of one of the coeds in my Constitutional Law class. Hence, I merited an invitation.

But I also discovered another link with Holy Angel U. I found out that the co-founders of the university were Don Juan Nepomuceno, patriarch of the Nepomucenos who are an Ateneo family; and Fr. Pedro Santos, who later became Bishop Pedro Santos and co-founder and important benefactor of the Ateneo de Naga where I finished high school. I was told that the façades of Ateneo de Naga and Holy Angel U are similar due to the fact that Bishop Santos engaged the same architect for both. (The bishop was residing next door to the Ateneo de Naga when I was in high school. We used to throw stones at the bishop's dogs which roamed the Ateneo campus. But an elderly Jesuit did us better. After downing one of the bishop's dogs with a hunting rifle, he said, "Sorry, I did not see the episcopal red cap on the dogs head." So much about episcopal dogs.)

The bishop had the foresight to see the need for quality but affordable schools, a need now emphasized in the current Constitution. Holy Angel U grew out of that foresight. It was started as "an academy envisioned to offer quality but affordable Catholic education to boys and girls of what was then the municipality of Angeles." Seventy-five years later, the new president could say in her inaugural speech that the seed planted years before had "grown into a giant tree, with a student population of 15,000 and a strong work force of 800, the biggest school in the region and the biggest employer in the city."

Number and size, of course, are not everything. What is more important is meaning. What has the school meant for Angeles City and its environs? We answer this question in the context of a nation which, unlike our Asian neighbors, does not financially support private schools; and not only that, it even taxes them and imposes restrictions on their capacity for growth.

Holy Angel U, like other similarly situated schools, has to rely only on the tuition and fees that students can afford to pay and on the generosity of benefactors who appreciate the importance of the mission of schools. And as the new president put it, "In all those years [that I studied in and served the school], I shared in the lives of countless young men and women, mostly Kapampangans, who sought the Filipino dream, not of fabulous fortune or fame, but rather of a decent life, with a good job and a wonderful family, with time to worship God and enjoy with relatives and friends, the blessings bestowed, the small crises allowed, and the few surprises given during this brief moment we call 'life on earth.'"

And what has Holy Angel U achieved? President Villanueva summed it up neatly: "The Holy Angel diploma is a respected credential, whether it be among the manufacturing and production companies for its engineers, in the top auditing firms for its accountants, banking institutions for its finance and management graduates, educational institutions for its teachers, hotel and service industries for its HRM graduates, IT companies for its computer technology, and soon in hospitals for its nursing graduates. But more importantly, the Holy Angel diploma is displayed proudly by owners and proprietors of many small and medium businesses, of entrepreneurs whose daily toils contribute to the prosperity of our country, for Holy Angel has always been a school that offers good education to the poor and emerging middle class."

Holy Angel, like many in the area, suffered from the Pinatubo eruption. But it rebounded with energy and enthusiasm and has since won autonomous status from the government, Level 3 accreditation from Paascu for almost all its programs, and recognition as a Center of Excellence. Holy Angel U takes particular pride in its Kapampangan Center, whose mission is to preserve and enhance the Kapampangan culture.

It is common knowledge that the nation is undergoing a severe crisis in education. Rescue efforts are being made both by the government and by the private sector. In the midst of all this, it is good to know that there are schools like Holy Angel throughout the country, striving in the face of adversity to deliver quality but affordable education to Filipinos whom public education has not served. We wish Dr. Arlyn Sicangco-Villanueva, and other private school presidents similarly situated, all success in their efforts to provide oases of learning for millions of Filipinos.

Koko's dynasty and the Tausug of Mindanao

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

MY TOWNMATE KOKO PIMENTEL GETS CRITIcized by Kit Tatad for "dynasticism," and he replies that political dynasties can only be defined in the context of a direct succession, involving members of the same family, to a public office in an electoral district. And Koko cites, as an example, the Estradas, whose patriarch is his political patron: Yes, he admits, there is a political dynasty in San Juan. But no, he says, the Pimentels cannot be accused of maintaining one.

Did Koko say it tongue-in-cheek? Koko must, of course, know that in Philippine politics, there are innumerable definitions, variations and faces of—as well as methods of establishing—a political dynasty. Koko's "dynastic succession" is only one of those varieties. When applied to a Senate seat, the election to which is not decided by a single electoral district, Koko's "definition" may somehow sound plausible.

The allure of perpetuating the family name is another factor that encourages dynasticism. I am sure it had crossed Koko's mind that carrying on father Nene's torch is a noble filial responsibility. How many times have we heard political families sounding like they were God's gift to the electorate? Lest we forget, "passing on the torch" was a theme of Pia Cayetano's Senate campaign in 2004, when the electorate had only kind memories of the cancer-stricken Rene Cayetano.

Koko need not look far and wide for political dynasties. In 2001, the man who defeated him in the Cagayan de Oro mayoral race, Vicente Emano, is very much of a "dynast" whose own political adventure defines political dynasties in yet another way. Dynastic succession is not always direct; and although three Emanos succeeded one after the other in tiny Tagoloan, Misamis Oriental, the "adventure" did not stop there. Emano ran in Cagayan de Oro where he neither had political residency nor historical roots. The more chairs there are in the game, the better for the dynasty members—there will be more room for them not just to play but also to dance a rigodon.

However one looks at it, by Koko's definition, it is still Kamag-anak Inc., a family perpetuating its monopoly on power through a variety of crafty ways. It is morally wrong, and the Filipino electorate should learn someday to excise it from our political system. Tatad is correct.

* * *

On Feb. 21 and 22, Ateneo de Zamboanga University (ADZU) is hosting the National Conference on Tausug History and Culture in Zamboanga City. This was announced by my fellow anthropologist Dr. Robert Panaguiton, the director of ADZU's Institute of Cultural Studies for Western Mindanao.

The event is part of a series of conferences aimed at promoting awareness, understanding and appreciation of the ethno-linguistic groups in Western Mindanao and the Sulu archipelago. The conference series is one of ADZU's contributions to the continuing efforts to integrate local history and culture into the regular instructional curricula of Western Mindanao schools, colleges and universities. This long-term work is, in turn, part of the greater thrust to promote peace through better inter-cultural understanding and appreciation.

In the past, ADZU had hosted well-attended conferences on "Western Mindanao on 1899" (May 10-11, 1999), on the "Chabacano Language" (Nov. 11-12, 1999), on "Bajau Culture and History" (Feb. 26-27, 2001), on "Subanon Culture and History" (Feb. 18-19, 2002), and on "Yakan Culture and History" (Feb. 23-24, 2004).

More than a hundred participants are expected to attend this year's Tausug Conference. They will be mainly educators, media people, church and government representatives, NGOs, students, researchers and the culturati. The conference's main offering is a series of paper presentations by historians, anthropologists, folklore researchers and Tausug resource persons. To be discussed are Tausug History (Dr. Asiri Abubakar of UP Diliman), Art (Dr. Abraham Sakili of UP Diliman), Language and Literature (Dr. Calbi Asain of MSU Jolo), Food (Dr. Norama A. Abdulla of Jolo), Customs and Beliefs (lawyer Mehol Sadain), Gender and Kinship (Dr. Carmen Abubakar of UP Diliman), Politics and Governance (Prof. Julkipli Wadi of UP Diliman), Conflict (Dr. Jamail A. Kamlian of MSU-IIT), Pangalay (Ligaya Amilbangsa), Peace and Development (Dr. Santanina Rasul), and Preservation of Intangible Heritage (Dr. Jesus Peralta of the NCCA). The papers will be published in the Culture and Peace Studies, the ADZU journal on peace and culture.

The conference will also feature some special cultural presentations by local Tausug groups. In addition, some Tausug artifacts, attire, food, music and dance will be showcased.

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

A grudge match

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

NATIONAL ARTIST F. SIONIL JOSÉ SAYS HE lost his respect for Claro M. Recto when he personally witnessed him express hatred for Ramon Magsaysay. In his book, "Why We Are Poor," José recounts the incident: "Recto was opposed to agrarian reform ... not as a matter of principle but because it was championed by ... Magsaysay whom he loathed. He described him thus: ... 'That ignoramus—he stole the presidency from me'..." The joke among Magsaysay's intellectual contemporaries was that he was so dumb, he wanted to repeal the law of supply and demand.

And yet—though the unprincipled chant it and understand it the wrong way—it is true that politics is a numbers game. A leader is not measured by the bridges and highways he builds but by the ballot box and the numbers it disgorges on election day. By that measure, the victorious aren't necessarily the winners.

Magsaysay was unique: he got 68.9 percent of the votes cast, in the first (and only) time he ran for president. No president before or since could match it: only one came close in a first term victory (68 percent in 1935); and only two are comparable with regard to second term victories (81.78 percent in 1941, but that was with a one-party state; 61.5 percent in 1969, but that was after spending one-fourth of the national budget on electioneering).

This is why I've always insisted on keeping Joseph Estrada's victory in 1998 firmly in perspective: it was massive only in terms of his competition, and not in terms of past elections. His victory was on par with the only plurality, and not majority, president of the premarital law era: Carlos Garcia's 41.3 percent in 1957.

And it is no wonder vice presidents have given incumbent presidents nightmares—since Sergio Osmeña Sr. obtained 87 percent in 1935 and 92.1 percent in 1941. Estrada's 33 percent in 1992 made him the man to beat; Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's 49.56 percent gave her the confidence to eventually break with Estrada; Noli de Castro's 49.8 percent in 2004 makes him impossible to ignore. There may be reason to say that a voter decides on a vice president in a manner different from the way he picks a president, but it has no effect either on a president's insecurities or a vice president's bloating ambitions.

This also explains why every senator who obtains more votes than an incumbent president in an election becomes convinced he or she can do a better job. The votes can exceed a president's in colossal terms. President Arroyo claimed 12.9 million votes in 2004; De Castro, 15.1 million. Four senators that year obtained more votes than the president: Roxas, Revilla, Pimentel, Madrigal; while Gordon, Cayetano and Santiago obtained only slightly less. Two senators exceeded the vice president's votes: Revilla and Roxas.

To say that senators fight each other less than, say, presidential or vice-presidential candidates, and are picked wholesale by the voters, is, again, irrelevant to a senator's ambitions, and in a sense, to the expectations of voters when they see the results. Post-election, people pore over senatorial results to see who is in play for the presidency as much as to find out if they helped pick winners in the race.

The weakness of the present administration can thus be best seen by its current sad excuse for a slate it's trying to cobble together. The historian Mina Roces once observed that, politically, candidates are measured by voters on whether they're "*malakas*." Strength being measured not by machismo (though that has always helped), but by their being able to bring home the bacon and, more importantly, by being perceived as winners. The voters who pick an underdog, thinking that by so doing, they're producing a victor, play up to the cult of the winner.

This is one reason I'm convinced too many politicians attempt a campaign, even though they're doomed to lose, only to wonder why their being the underdog killed off their political careers. The reason is, they didn't win, and the voter has no scruples about abandoning an underdog who lacked the will—or luck—to be top dog.

Not being "*malakas*" enough to anoint her own loyalists as senatorial candidates, the President lacks a fundamental attribute of an effective president. Estrada, too, has been unable to totally get his way, even within the opposition—which is why even some of those formerly deemed his loyalists have gone, tails wagging, to the President's camp.

Obviously, the national portion of the May elections is more than a fight between Arroyo and Estrada. To be sure, their grudge match is part of the campaign; but the campaign is larger than them.

A strong President, two years into a crisis, should be gunning to obtain victory on her terms; instead, victory is so obviously a long shot such that the least common denominator, media exposure, reigns supreme among her candidates. Never mind what that says about the gigantic gulf between what the President claims to represent and the best her administration's advantages have to offer: merely money, not leadership.

An Estrada really adored by the public should be acting as the supreme arbiter of an opposition lineup; instead, from detention, his concern has been to preserve his two-seat bloc in the Senate, and bargain away everything else, for in the end all he has is money—but never as much as the Palace can produce. As for charisma, it can only rub off so much, and never as much when lent from a jail cell and when not freely given as a free man.

The Senate race is a test—a chaotic one as any democratic experiment has to be—to see who will be in line for the next top dog race. And so it's about two things: who will keep the administration in its place, and who is poised to replace it. So it's a grudge match—between the Pre... and the public.

BEAM shows the way

COMMENTARY

Butch Hernandez

I FIRST MET DR. SUSAN ESTIGOY FIVE YEARS AGO WHEN she was still the superintendent of the Davao City Schools Division. At that time, she was already painfully aware of the deepening education crisis, especially in her jurisdiction. Estigoy and several other participants from private foundations, NGOs and the academic community in Davao City were at a forum on the Department of Education's Adopt-A-School program organized and sponsored by Councilor Mabel Acosta and Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte.

The aim of the gathering was precisely to impress upon those in the private sector that they too were public education stakeholders and that programs like Adopt-A-School offered them a viable venue to show that they cared about Mindanao's public schools. At that forum, Estigoy wondered if it were at all possible to address the problems of education adequately and in a sustainable fashion, especially in Mindanao where armed conflict periodically ripped through a fragile peace. However, as an educator, Estigoy was determined to respond to the education needs of Mindanao's school-age children to the best of her abilities.

In January of that year, the DepEd unveiled a massive education improvement program for Regions 11, 12 and the ARMM. The initiative was called BEAM—for Basic Education Assistance for Mindanao. BEAM is a bilateral project powered by a AU$63-million grant from the Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) with counterpart funding from the national government.

We had the chance to exchange views with Dr. Ian Darcy Walsh and Alastair Douglas, BEAM's Australian project director and deputy project director, respectively. Both Walsh and Douglas have been in the country since BEAM began, and the insights they offered showed that the depth of their knowledge went far beyond education-related issues.

Walsh attributes BEAM's success to "an awareness and agreement from the highest level that education is in a state of crisis and in desperate need of dramatic changes." This in turn has "generated an acceptance of a culture of change and an appreciation of the enormous nature of the task" by all education stakeholders.

This BEAM premise closely reflects the essence of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power's **Education Revolution**, which advocates strong community involvement alongside an equally determined drive for quality improvement as a full-fledged response, from teachers and school administrators, to the education crisis.

Douglas, meanwhile, is also BEAM's school management specialist. He says that they have successfully been able to generate school improvement plans premised on improved learning outcomes. This is a very important development, because it elevates the school improvement plan from a mere wish list to a true joint declaration of commitment to quality education by the school and the community it serves.

Walsh says that BEAM takes a holistic approach "where all factors contributing to the quality of student learning in classrooms or why students are not participating in formal education programs are being addressed simultaneously."

How so? Well, BEAM's major achievements in 2006 include in-service training in English, Math and Science for 5,306 elementary school teachers and 2,218 high school teachers. Among other things, these training sessions focus on learning strategies and styles and constructivist approaches to teaching.

BEAM'S Materials Development team has, in fact, crafted simplified learning guides based on the Minimum Learning Competencies prescribed in the Basic Education Curriculum. We have received reports that the teachers in BEAM's target regions have found these learning guides to be extremely helpful. Walsh says that these learning guides are freely available to teachers and interested parties through BEAM's website.

BEAM's education initiative would not be complete without a component to extend continuing support to Muslim education. In partnership with the University of Southern Philippines, the University of Southern Mindanao and the Mindanao State University in General Santos City, BEAM has designed and developed a 23-day training program, called Language Enhancement and Pedagogy (LEaP), to enhance English communication skills, strengthen lesson planning and teaching skills, and orient teachers in Arabic Language and Islamic Values Education.

Together with LEaP comes the Accelerated Teacher Education Program (ATEP), which seeks to strengthen the teacher education foundation of the *asatidz* or Islamic teachers in both public schools and private *madaris*. At the end of the course, the *asatidz* become BS Elementary Education degree holders, with majors in Islamic Studies and Arabic.

BEAM has a host of other programs and initiatives that are all impressive. But the state of education in Mindanao is far from optimal. In fact, the 2006 National Achievement test results show that less than one percent of the 5,000 or so public elementary schools in Regions 11, 12 and the ARMM managed to score at least 75 percent in all of the five subject areas tested.

There are about 5,000 elementary schools and 683 high schools spread out in 24 DepEd school divisions in BEAM's target regions. About 1.6 million elementary pupils and half a million high school students consider these schools their second home. These schools, their students and their faculties face the same problems—more or less—that bedevil the rest of the public school system: below par academic achievement, substandard facilities and inadequately trained teachers. In Mindanao, the situation is exacerbated by poverty, insurgency and the proliferation of armed terrorist groups. There are many social development initiatives being implemented in Mindanao but apparently not enough are focused on improving education quality on a sustained basis.

How do Walsh and Douglas—together with the entire 130-strong BEAM project staff—manage to keep their fervor in the face of all these? The answer is simple: these men are and will always be teachers. Walsh used to teach chemistry back in Australia. Douglas—a close friend and neighbor of Walsh—was for quite some time a school principal.

And how about Estigoy? Well, aside from moving up to the post of DepEd assistant regional director, she has joined BEAM as its Philippine project manager. She is justifiably proud of BEAM's handiwork and she says "BEAM is a gift from the people of Australia to our children, and we must continue to value that gift on their behalf."

Butch Hernandez is the executive director of the Foundation for Worldwide People Power.

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VP should do more than tell seniors to file complaint at Osca

I WAS GLAD TO READ THE RESponse of Vice President Noli de Castro assuring senior citizens that they are entitled to a 20-percent discount even when they use credit cards in buying their medicines. (Inquirer, 1/31/07) After a consultation with my doctor later in the day, I went to a giant drug store to buy the prescribed medicine that I have to take for one month.

I pulled out my credit card (Visa) together with my senior citizen's card and handed it over to one of the attendants. To my surprise, I was told that the drug store didn't honor the 20-percent discount privilege of senior citizens using the credit card for payment. I told her about the letter of "Kabayan" in the INQUIRER, but she insisted that it was management policy not to grant the usual 20-percent discount to credit card buyers.

Since I needed badly the medicine for my ailment, I had no choice but to charge the total amount of more than P3,000 to my card without a single-centavo discount. I am now retired and the amount I paid was almost the equivalent of my monthly pension, which I spend mostly for my maintenance pills. You can just imagine how many more drugs I could have bought with the 20-percent discount the drug store uncharitably deprived me of.

Perhaps, Vice President De Castro can help us to personally look into the issue instead of sending aging and ailing citizens to the local Osca (Office for Senior Citizens Affairs) to file a complaint. I am certain that thousands of senior citizens will be grateful to "Kabayan" for whatever help he can extend to solve this problem.

—JORGE REYES,
jorgereyes1124@yahoo.com

Proposed law to provide new tools vs terrorism

MAY I RESPECTFULLY COMMENT on the Jan. 29 column of Conrado de Quiros. Since the year 2000, 51 bombing attacks were perpetrated by terrorists, 13 of which took place in Manila, including the Super Ferry, Rizal Day-LRT, Golden Hi-Way Transit and the twin Valentine's Day attack that left 325 dead and 1,115 injured.

The threat of terrorism is real and ever present. It is not a concoction of the imagination or wild speculation. It's real, it's everywhere, with the public exposed to imminent danger unless we put terrorists in check, disrupt their plans and arrest and prosecute them before they can kill the innocent and wreak havoc on our security and economy.

Terrorism is an extraordinary crime that necessitates extraordinary remedies in today's extraordinary times. The Super Ferry and Valentine's Day bombings could have been avoided had we had an anti-terrorism law that could've kept the suspects behind bars, and prevented them from plotting these attacks. It is a fact that terrorists are becoming more ingenious and have been using more sophisticated weaponry and technologies in plotting and carrying out their attacks. It is likewise a fact that we have been fighting terrorism, a 21st-century crime with an antiquated law (the Revised Penal Code enacted in the 1930s) and with antiquated means and weaponry that are no match to the faceless enemy.

The proposed anti-terrorism law is our government's response to the challenge of trying to win the war on terror without losing our democratic values and ideals. When we fight terrorism, we are defending the proposition that our political life should be free from terror and violence, for a people who live in fear are not free. We can't have democracy without rights, and our rights cannot be secure without democracy.

Our civil rights are not absolute. Such rights must depend upon the survival of the government and must be subordinated to its preservation. It is wrong to suppose that the bill suggests an unjustified ascendancy of authority over the individual's right to freedom and liberty. The proposed law only seeks to empower our law enforcement officers by providing them new methods and legal tools to prevent, interdict, arrest and prosecute terrorists; no more, no less.

It is only the terrorists who should be afraid of the proposed anti-terror law, even though we do recognize that even they have rights that we must respect. Law-abiding citizens and legitimate political dissenters have nothing to fear of this law. It is solely meant to protect the citizenry and our democracy, not to destroy it.

The most dreadful terror, however, is the possibility of being consumed by our own biases and paranoia—which see everything this administration does as always linked to political expediency and the quelling of legitimate political dissent. By always thinking so, we are unwittingly helping the terrorists succeed.

—RICARDO R. BLANCAFLOR,
director for legal, public information and advocacy, Anti-Terrorism Task Force

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

Toothless BIR

THIS IS INCREDIBLE BUT TRUE. The Bureau of Internal Revenue is toothless when it comes to the implementation of revenue laws, rules and regulations.

For example, big establishments defy the BIR requirement on the issuance of official receipts, disregarding customers' demand for receipts despite the BIR's notice (prominently displayed on walls of business establishments) requiring stores to issue official receipts.

To celebrate my daughter Maria Buena's 46th birthday, her brother Freddie (an overseas Filipino worker from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia) invited all his siblings to a *merienda cena* at a popular fast-food chain outlet located inside the Central Plaza Mall, Barangay Lagon, Daet, Camarines Norte. However, when my son paid the bill, he was not given an official receipt. All he got was a computer printout that showed the establishment's TIN with three zeros on both ends instead of the required nine; and there was no official receipt number at all.

My husband, as the patriarch of the family, demanded an official receipt but the teller told him that the restaurant had run out of official receipts. It is not unusual for big business establishments to tell their customers that their official receipts are still in the printing press or with the BIR for inspection and annotation.

Can't the BIR impose discipline on those who fail to issue official receipts for business transactions? Or are there other reasons BIR people are reluctant to enforce this requirement?

—TRINIDAD ESTURAS PETEZA,
Daet, Camarines Norte 4600

Has the gov't forgotten RA 7696?

HAVE THE ADMINISTRATOR OF the Philippine Veterans Affairs Office, the honorable members of Congress and the President of the Philippines forgotten altogether to implement Republic Act 7696 which provides for the benefits of World War II veterans (who have reached the age of 70) and their spouses?

The law was passed in March 1994 by the Senate and the House of Representatives, then headed by the honorable gentlemen Edgardo Angara and Jose de Venecia, respectively. It was signed into law on April 9, 1994 by President Fidel V. Ramos.

It is now, Jan. 3, 2007, but the veterans still have to benefit from the law's implementation. The question: Is there still a chance we could enjoy the benefits due us under RA 7696?

Or, must we stop hoping because this law is another example of irresponsible legislation by our so-called political leaders?

—JOSE Q. BORBON,
4901 Gladiola St.,
Marimar Village,
Parañaque City

COA team authorized to probe AFP deals

MAY I INVITE YOUR ATTENTION to the special report titled "AFP modernization drive sputters." (Inquirer, 1/8, 9, 10/07) The report cited the "special COA team" that "presented its finding to top COA officials as well as to the Ombudsman for the Military." It also said that "the team was not allowed to further investigate the AFP, and its findings [were] not acted upon."

For the record, no report on such "findings" was presented or submitted to me; and, contrary to what was made to appear in the INQUIRER special report, I approved the request of Heidi Mendoza, state auditor 5, Commission on Audit, for an office order granting COA auditors the authority to do an exhaustive investigation on the transactions of the Armed Forces of the Philippines beyond the case of Maj. Gen. Carlos Garcia.

Rest assured that this office does not tolerate grafters in government, and we judiciously act on all complaints and reports that are submitted to us.

—ORLANDO C. CASIMIRO,
overall deputy ombudsman, OIC, deputy ombudsman for the military and other law enforcement offices, Office of the Ombudsman, 3/F Agham Road, Diliman, QC

Not a way to treat OFWs

THE PHILIPPINES IN AN ECOnomic boom? What is President Macapagal-Arroyo, this overrated economist, talking about? The Philippine economy is booming such that Filipinos don't have to go abroad to work. What?

The overseas Filipino workers are the only reason the Philippines is still alive. Yet, they are not treated properly when they go home; many of them end up victims of extortion, "courtesy" of the vultures in Philippine airports.

Please, somebody, wake up! Is this how the government treats the people who are helping the country survive? The President should give credit where credit is due. It's not the call center specialists and medical transcriptionists but the OFWs who are keeping afloat the otherwise lifeless Philippine economy.

—MANUEL LEDESMA,
3803 Santa Ana St.,
Huntington Park, CA 90255

FVR didn't touch AFP modernization funds

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE JAN. 14 column of Ramon J. Farolan, wherein he mentioned the AFP Modernization Program (AFPMP) during and after the Ramos administration.

It looks like Farolan is running out of fresh thoughts: What he said were practically the same things he said on the subject on Dec. 21, 1998, in his old column in The Philippine Star. Unfortunately, the information and data he had eight years ago, which were evidently incomplete and, in some parts, incorrect and misleading, remain so to this date.

Our "Letter to the Editor" responding to Farolan's 1998 column, like many other similar letters which cannot be accommodated due to "space limitation," never found print.

Please allow us to set the record straight in fairness to all concerned:

1. The purchase price of the Fort Bonifacio property agreed upon by the BCDA and the buyer, Bonifacio Land Corp. (BLC) was more than P30.5 billion. The 35 percent share of the AFPMP from the net proceeds of the sale amounted to P5.484 billion. This amount was remitted by the BCDA to the Bureau of Treasury (BOT) in seven tranches, from Feb. 28, 1995 to Dec. 9, 1997.

2. That amount was placed by the BOT in Special Account No. A5514-170 earmarked for the AFPMP. This was reflected in the corresponding Bureau of Treasury Journal Voucher No. 4607438.

3. The AFP advised the Office of the President of its readiness to manage the trust fund for the AFPMP on April 30, 1998, barely two weeks before the national elections. Prudence dictated that the handling of the trust fund (into which the money allocated for the program will be placed) be left to the incoming administration.

4. During the Estrada administration, the AFPMP was relegated to a low priority. A July 21, 1998 letter of former Budget Secretary Benjamin Diokno to then Defense Secretary Orlando Mercado stated that: "The release of the said amount as requested by the AFP cannot be effected." This was based on a July 8, 1998 memo (from Diokno to the President) which stated that the AFPMP "will be postponed for a better time when the financial crisis is over or the Program can be continuously pursued."

5. On May 29, 2000, the DBM issued a Special Allotment Release Order (Saro) to the AFP for P5.484 billion.

6. Eventually, on June 26, 2000, Diokno disbursed from the AFPM Fund the amount of P49.9 million per NCA (notice of cash allocation) 112694-1. On Aug. 21, 2000, Diokno disbursed from the AFPM Fund, the amount of P59.5 million (NCA 118219-1).

7. The foregoing positively establishes that the AFPM Fund remained intact during and until the end of the Ramos administration; and that the Estrada administration exercised control over, and made disbursements from, the same fund.

—NICK A. LAGUSTAN,
spokesman of former President Fidel V. Ramos

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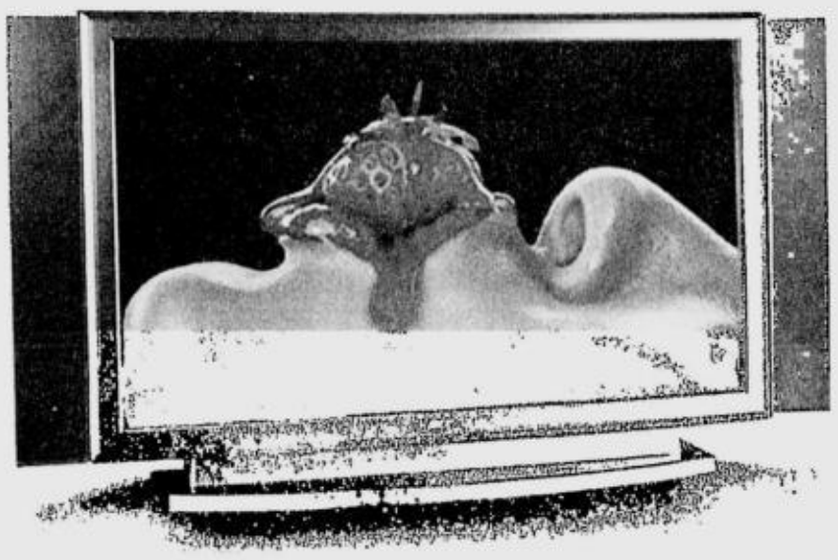

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Cold spell pushes up vegetable prices

BAGUIO CITY—THE COLD SPELL HERE INCREASED THE prices of vegetables, at least in the city market.

Traders increased prices because of the presence of tourists, who were drawn to Baguio's cold weather, and not due to frost that reportedly destroyed P10 million worth of vegetables in Atok, Benguet, last week.

Broccoli, which used to sell for P35 and P40 a kilogram last week, costs P50 a kg.

A kilogram of carrots was sold at P35 on Sunday, while cauliflower went at P40 a kg in stalls frequented by tourists.

Even strawberries, which were being sold on the streets last week for P50 to P60 a kg because of the huge supply, are now sold for P100 a kg.

Farmers were concerned that vendors would take advantage of reports on the frost that covered the farms of Benguet and Mt. Province.

In a press statement, Danilo Ramos, secretary general of the Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas, said reports should not tempt traders to increase vegetable prices.

"It is true that the frost affected the vegetable farms in Benguet, like in Atok where 100 hectares were damaged," he said.

He cited reports relayed to KMP by the Cordillera-based farmers group Apit Tako, which said the frost also damaged 300 ha of Kibungan farms and 400 ha of Mankayan farms.

Temperatures in Baguio City dropped to 9 degrees Celsius on Jan. 31, the lowest recorded in three years. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) does not have temperature monitoring facilities in the areas affected by frost but farmers and officials there said the temperature dropped to at least 5 degrees Celsius in their mountain farms.

"The most affected vegetables were potatoes and cabbage," Ramos said.

"Our local chapter in the Apit Tako is saying that though temperatures dropped by 4 degrees [Celsius], vegetable price should not increase because there are still abundant supplies of the crops. The traders are exploiting the situation and increasing vegetable prices," he said.

Supplies are abundant, said a stall owner at the Baguio City public market.

But she said demand is also up now that tourists are flocking back to the summer capital.

A business convention and a Department of Education-sponsored campus journalism competition have been timed to coincide with the 11th staging of the Baguio Flower Festival later this month.

Hotels also reported bookings for the week "because there is a high interest in the cold weather reported by the media," said Benedicto Alhambra, city tourism officer.

In Bulacan, vegetable farmers in San Ildefonso town said the prices of vegetables from their town have not increased contrary to reports circulating in their outlets in Metro Manila.

Romeo Mendoza, president of the San Ildefonso Vegetable Growers Association (Sivga), said they wanted to clarify reports being relayed by vendors at the Balintawak and Muñoz markets on Edsa in Quezon City to their buyers that prices had increased due to supply shortage.

There was no shortage, he said, adding that they have more than enough supply of tomatoes, eggplants, bitter gourd, string beans and okra, among others.

He said the traders and vendors were blaming the pest attacks and cold weather that hit vegetable farms in Bulacan and Northern Luzon for the price increase.

He said local vegetable farmers have in fact been forced to drop the prices of their produce because of oversupply.

"The truth is traders manipulate the prices in the market. They buy the vegetables at lower prices from us and increase the prices when they pass these on to retailers," he said. *Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon, with reports from Carmela Reyes, Inquirer Central Luzon*

THE TEMPERATURE in Atok, Benguet drops close to 5 degrees Celsius, which is why frost often hits crops, says Atok Mayor Concepcion Balao. EV ESPIRITU/ INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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A METROBANK SUBSIDIARY

STATEMENT OF CONDITION
(Head Office and Financial Subsidiaries)
As of December 29, 2006

ASSETS

Cash and Cash Items	920,450,071.05	Board of Directors
Due from Bangko Sentral	4,124,965,853.72	
Due from Other Banks	1,579,247,400.69	
Interbank Loans Receivable		Jose T. Pardo Chairman
Trading Account Securities (Net)	826,615,092.37	
Investments in Bonds and Other Debt Instruments (Net)	17,267,225,668.61	
Loans, Discounts & Advances (Net)	30,797,790,143.16	
Equity Investments (Net)	145,546,789.21	Jovencio F. Cinco Vice Chairman
Bank Premises, Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (Net)	2,073,760,853.34	
Other Assets (Net)		
Property Owned/Acquired	1,676,065,636.86	
Others	2,779,857,212.36	Arthur V. Ty Vice Chairman
TOTAL ASSETS	62,191,524,721.47	

LIABILITIES

		Jose G. Araullo
Demand Deposits	4,374,176,147.15	
Savings Deposits	9,020,332,353.99	Ma. Theresa G. Barretto
Time Deposits	38,050,343,788.43	
Due to Bangko Sentral	20,025,442.48	
Due to Banks	-	
Outstanding Checks/Payment Orders	354,495,889.86	Margaret T. Cham
Bills Payable		
BSP-Rediscount/Special Programs	-	
Others	1,965,931,227.47	David O. Chua
Unearned Income and Other Deferred Credits	45,261,456.86	
Other Liabilities	1,648,795,788.16	
TOTAL LIABILITIES	55,479,362,094.40	Pascual M. Garcia III

CAPITAL ACCOUNTS

		Alfredo P. Javellana II
Capital Stock	2,019,383,150.00	
Surplus	4,240,032,271.65	
Surplus Reserves	452,747,205.42	Regis V. Puno
TOTAL CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	6,712,162,627.07	
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND CAPITAL ACCOUNTS	62,191,524,721.47	Maria Ursula R. Resurreccion

CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS

Bills for Collection	14,724.00	Principal Officers
Assets Held Under Trust and Investment Management Agreements	293,495,126.17	Pascual M. Garcia III President
Invested in:		
Other Securities, Debt Instruments and Shares of Stock	142,678,548.71	
Other Assets	150,816,577.46	Rolando A. Rodriguez Executive Vice President
Accountabilities:		
Trust & Other Fiduciary	291,966,679.88	
Unearned Income & Other Accountabilities	1,528,446.29	
Other Contingent Accounts	88,547,270.88	Jaime V.L. Araneta Senior Vice President
TOTAL CONTINGENT ACCOUNTS	382,057,121.05	

Additional Information:		Noli S. Gomez Senior Vice President
1. Deposits of		
a) Government	-	
b) Banks	33,253,559.16	
c) Trust Department	150,668,877.53	
2. a. Total Non-Performing Loans	2,825,635,901.16	
b. Classified Loans and Other Risk Assets	4,789,926,633.45	
c. General Loan Loss Reserve	266,265,739.45	
d. Specific Loan Loss Reserve	1,458,910,080.20	
e. Total DOSRI Loans/Advances	1,548,563,110.76	
f. Past Due DOSRI Loans Advances	-	
g. Ratio of Non-Performing Loans to Total Loan Portfolio	8.08%	
h. Ratio of Total DOSRI Loans/Advances to Total Loan Portfolio	4.43%	
i. Ratio of Past Due DOSRI to Total Loan Portfolio	-	
j. Return on Equity	14.11%	
3. Compliance with Magna Carta Law		
a. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 6% (Small Enterprises)	36.66%	
b. Prescribed Ratio of Compliance for 2% (Medium Enterprises)	4.36%	

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES)
CITY OF MAKATI) S. S.

We, PERFECTO RAMON Z. DIMAYUGA JR. and PASCUAL M. GARCIA III of the above-mentioned bank do solemnly swear that all matters set forth in the above statement of condition are true and correct to the best of our knowledge and belief.

(Sgd) PERFECTO RAMON Z. DIMAYUGA JR.
First Vice President

(Sgd) PASCUAL M. GARCIA III
President

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me this 22 January 2007 at City of Makati, affiant exhibiting to me their Community Tax Certificates No. 02121638 issued at Makati City on January 16, 2006 and No. 12799268 issued at Quezon City on February 10, 2006.

(Sgd) ATTY. JOSE HERNANDEZ DY
Notary Public
Until December 31, 2008
PTR No. 5273383 - Mla 1-05-07
IBP No. 674804 - Mla 1-05-07
City of Makati

Doc. No. 17
Book No. 04
Page No. CCLXVII
Series of 2007

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- To make politics an effective means for the integral development or total well-being of all rather than a tool for the advancement of a privileged few;
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Date & Place of Birth: _____ E-mail: _____
Profession: _____ Employer/Company: _____
Tel. No.: _____ Fax No.: _____ E-mail: _____
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Signature of member: _____

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Office Address: 54 Katipunan Avenue, White Plains Subdivision, Quezon City Philippines
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DA requesting for P4B more in funds for farms

DAVAO CITY—THE DEPARTMENT of Agriculture is asking for another P3-4 billion in supplemental funds for the rehabilitation of irrigated farmlands nationwide on top of its regular P19.5-billion budget allotment.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap told reporters here on Wednesday that the supplemental fund was critical in conserving 4 million hectares of rice lands.

Yap said that without the funding, about 27,000 ha of farmlands would be lost every year in the next two years.

"The President has no objection to ... that fundamental investment but we need another Cabinet meeting to identify the specific areas," he said.

Bayan Muna Rep. Joel Virador said the DA request, which came as the elections draw near, was suspect.

He said a similar request was made by the department, then under Secretary Leonardo Montemayor, shortly before the 2004 polls.

Virador said the money, amounting to more than P2 billion, was allegedly funneled into President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign and for the purchase of overpriced fertilizers.

The President has denied the charges.

Former Undersecretary Jocelyn Bolante, said to be the man behind the scam, had since fled the country.

During a visit to the Southern Philippines Development Authority (SPDA) office here, Yap said some of the money from the additional budget would be given to the National Irrigation Authority to beef up its allocation of P1 billion.

He said the NIA would use the money to rehabilitate irrigation facilities that could help boost the country's rice production.

Yap said the government's program on food security could only be achieved with increased production.

Aside from rehabilitating irrigation facilities, he said the government would also be spending on certified and hybrid seeds.

He pointed out that compared to traditional seed varieties, hybrid seeds could produce about seven tons per hectare while certified seeds could produce up to six tons per season.

Apart from establishing support for rice production, Yap said his department was targeting to increase corn production to two to three percent and stop importation by 2008.

Last year, the country imported 300,000 tons of corn. *Rizalene Acac and Judy Quiros, Inquirer Mindanao*

Jerwin's parents need help

By Dennis Jay Santos
Inquirer Mindanao

JERWIN DENNIS JAY SANTOS

DIGOS CITY—FOUR-MONTH-old Jerwin Paul Batiles may not live longer unless he undergoes a critical operation to close two large holes in his heart.

The sooner he gets the surgery, the better his chances to live, according to his doctors.

But for his parents—Edwin, a soldier, and Regina, a contractual government employee—finding the money is next to impossible.

Weighing 8.5 lbs when he was born, the boy appears to be in the pink of health, Regina recalled.

She said it was only after about two weeks since birth when she learned that her baby has a congenital heart disease. A series of tests due to recurring fever, cough and colds confirmed this condition.

"He was healthy before," Regina said as she cradled Jerwin. He is already malnourished and his growth stunted.

Dr. Sheldon Paragas said this was a dangerous stage in Jerwin's life. He would easily catch infections that exact a toll on his body. If this happens, he said, the much-needed operation would be futile.

Paragas said the boy must be operated on within a year or else complications would be severe that it "would be impossible for him to have the surgery."

"The risk for the child is high if (the holes) are not closed in time," the pediatric cardiologist, who once worked at the Philippine Heart Center in Quezon City, explained at the Davao Doctors Hospital in Davao City.

"The earlier, the better because there is no complication yet," he said, adding that Jerwin's case was in "high risk of infection."

But like many other babies with the same heart disease born to poor families, the chances for Jerwin undergoing the critical operation is very slim.

Regina said the family was told that at least P800,000 was needed, aside from miscellaneous expenses and medication.

Paragas admitted that the cost could increase because it actually "depends also on the category of the operation."

If the condition becomes severe, the surgery becomes more complicated, he said.

Regina said she did not know where to get the money. She said as a contractual worker, she earns P220 per day while her husband earns about P8,000 a month.

She said she could not figure out ways to raise the money, except to appeal for help. She can be reached at mobile phone number 09103355085.

W. Mindanao poll chief asks for Army help

ZAMBOANGA CITY—SOME teachers in Western Mindanao who will serve in the May elections are having second thoughts about accepting assignments in remote areas if they will not be accompanied by soldiers, according to Helen Aguila-Flores, Commission on Elections director for Western Mindanao.

"I don't think teachers will go to areas without support from the AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), we might lose lives," Aguila-Flores told the INQUIRER.

"They want [the] AFP instead of the PNP," she said.

Aguila-Flores said the clamor came from teachers from the towns of Kabasalan and Tungawan in Zamboanga Sibugay, La Libertad and Sibuco in Zamboanga del Norte and Dinas, and Dimataling, Payao and Buug in Zamboanga del Sur.

"What we are doing now is passing a resolution, recommending the reconsideration of Task Force Hope. This reconsideration is based on the present realities in Mindanao," Aguila-Flores said.

Maj. Eugene Batara, spokesperson of the Western Mindanao Command, said the idea of tapping soldiers in remote towns "has already been discussed, and what we are waiting now is the resolution."

Batara also confirmed that the PNP agreed to provide security to the main town centers and cities while the AFP would handle far-flung areas or areas with a history of violence in the past two years.

The Moro group Suara Bangsamoro said the May elections could be another bloody event for the people of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

Amirah Lidasan, national vice chair of the Suara Bangsamoro, said many Moro civilians had heard reports of some politicians amassing guns and employing goons in preparation for the election.

This, as Deputy Speaker Abdulgani Salapuddin accused Basilan Gov. Wahab Akbar of collecting high-powered firearms for his private army in the province in preparation for the election.

"The governor is all-out in utilizing the resources of the provincial government in the purchase of firearms. He should be charged because I don't think the provincial government allocated funds for firearms. He is on a shopping spree for high-powered firearms," Salapuddin told the INQUIRER.

"This is not hearsay. The AFP and PNP are aware of this and it's a question why they are not touching him," Salapuddin said.

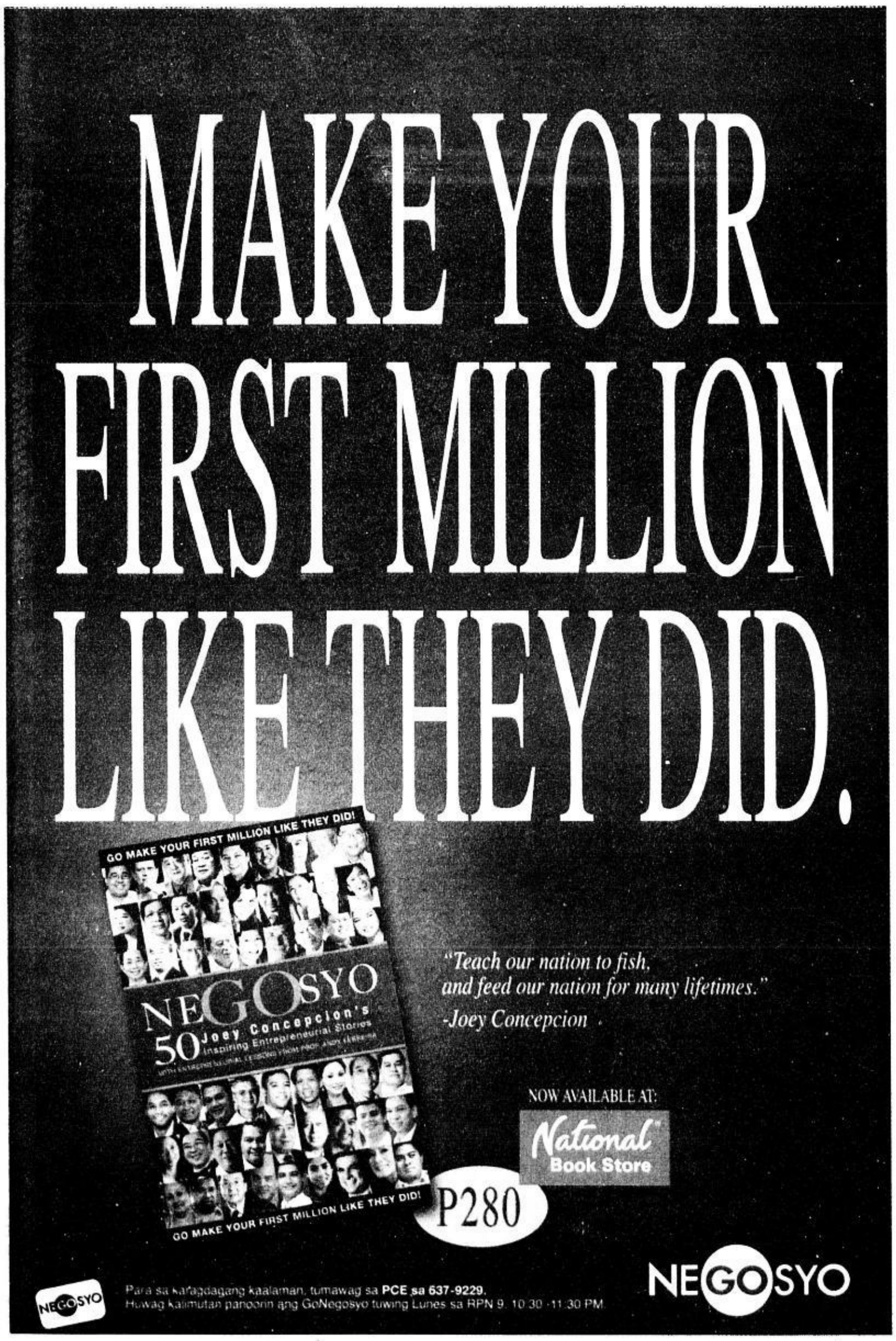
Akbar has denied the allegation. "It's pure lies. Not a single word is true. He is fabricating stories because he wants to return to the province and run for governor."

Akbar admitted that he owns several licensed firearms but "I never distributed any firearm to my supporters."

"Firearms are expensive and I don't use government funds just to acquire arms, it's not legal," he added.

"If I have plans of sowing terror in Basilan, why during elections? I should have done that before. Salapuddin is just making a bombastic statement so he could generate wider support as he is vying a local post here," Akbar added.

Julie Vidzfar, Comelec director for the ARMM, said she had not received any report about the alleged amassing of firearms. *Julie Alipala and Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*



ROUNDUP

3 nabbed for deadly chemicals

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police arrested three persons in possession of 15 kilos of sodium cyanide, a deadly chemical commonly used in illegal fishing. Police said Benedicto Reyes, 32, and truck helpers, Noel Avida, 28, and Ricky dela Cruz, 27 were collared at around 5:30 p.m. Jan. 28 at a police checkpoint along the main road linking Roxas town and Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. The checkpoint was in connection with the gun ban imposed by the Commission on Elections.

Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Solcom deactivates Task Force Mayon

LEGASPI CITY—After 55 days, the Armed Forces' Southern Luzon Command deactivated Joint Task Force Mayon Alpha, which served as the backbone of the government's rescue, relief and rehabilitation work in Albay following the widespread devastation wrought by Typhoon "Reming." In a formal send-off ceremony at Camp Simeon Ola on Jan. 26, Solcom chief Lt. Gen. Alexander Yano said the joint task force, whose members were taken from various units of the Army, Navy and Air Force, was first activated during the Mount Mayon eruption. During the send-off rites, Yano turned over to disaster officials a check for P50,000 representing donations from the Philippine Military Academy Cadet Corps for the Gawad-Kalinga project in Taysan, Legaspi City.

Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon

2 brothers die in fire

CABANATUAN CITY—Two brothers, one of them only 25 days old, died in a fire that gutted four houses in Barangay Aduas Norte here on Monday night. John Luis Enriquez, 2, and his infant brother, Juan Miguel, were left unattended in a rented room on the second floor of a house when fire broke out at about 8 p.m. Police said a lighted candle that the children's parents left a few feet from them caused the fire. The parents, Rodelito and Maricel, went out of their room about 25 minutes before the fire started. The house owners, Leopoldo and Leonora Sariente, who were living on the ground floor, said they did not immediately notice the fire.

Anselmo Roque, Inquirer Central Luzon

Missing elderly

VENANCIO "Ben" Cristobal, 72, has been missing since Jan. 28. He was last seen at Lo-ok, Santor, Malolos, Bulacan, wearing a black sando over a cream one, grey short pants and blue slippers. He stands 5'4" with a small body frame and weighing 120 lbs. Cristobal is afflicted with Alzheimer's Disease, and has difficulty in recalling things, even his own name. Those who know his whereabouts may bring him to Sacred Heart Hospital in Guinhawa, Malolos, Bulacan, or call Ramon or Susan Vivar at 09217989392.

CRISTOBAL

Catanduanes recovery fund

THE PROVINCIAL government of Catanduanes has requested President Macapagal-Arroyo to channel directly to it the P144 million it had requested for the immediate funding of its recovery efforts after Supertyphoon "Reming" caused major damage to infrastructures and agriculture. The amount is an integral part of the rehabilitation plan earlier drawn up by the province, which is estimated at P208 million. Gov. Leandro B. Verceles Jr. said directly channeling the money would hasten the implementation of vital rehabilitation programs and projects included in the priority list.

Inquirer Southern Luzon

Cop in hot water for shooting cop

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—A rookie cop is in hot water after he allegedly tried to kill a fellow policeman in Biñan, Laguna over the weekend. Police said PO1 Sonny Hernandez, of the San Pedro, Laguna police, remained in critical condition at the Perpetual Help Hospital in Biñan after PO1 William Consumo, assigned at the Carmona, Cavite, police station shot him at around 7:45 p.m. on Jan. 27. Police said Hernandez was driving his motorcycle in Barangay San Vicente when one of two men on board another motorcycle shot him at least four times. The victim suffered bullet wounds in the chest and right arm. While being rushed to the hospital, Hernandez told the investigator that Consumo was the one who shot him. Biñan police chief Supt. Joselito Esquivel said the families of the two policemen had a long-standing feud.

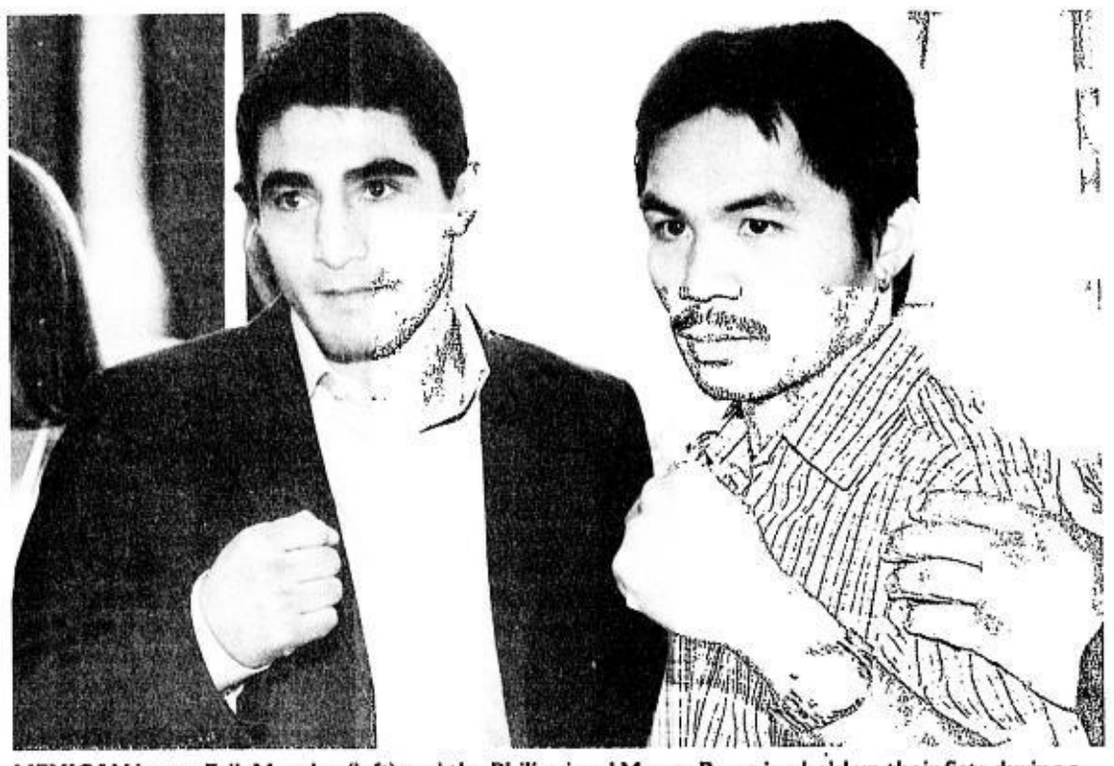
Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon

Pacquiao-Morales rematch over beer

From page A1

verbally with Morales in the days leading to their November match in Las Vegas, where Pacquiao floored Morales in the third round to end their super featherweight trilogy on a winning note, had a cameo role in the commercial.

"During the shoot, Freddie Roach approached Erik, but he didn't get the response he was expecting," said the insider, who was privy to every detail of the shoot. "The following day, Roach decided to see Erik in his room, to clear the air. On his way to Erik's room, he met Erik who was also exactly about to do the same thing."



MEXICAN boxer Erik Morales (left) and the Philippines' Manny Pacquiao hold up their fists during a news conference in Mexico City in this 2005 photo. INQUIRER PHOTO

2-day secret shoot

So as the shooting day wore on, the tension between two of the boxing world's fiercest gladiators thawed and "they started getting comfortable with each other."

Everything proceeded smoothly from then on.

The two-day shoot for the commercial, which was conceptualized in December, was held in a Forbes Park mansion in the second week of January. It was kept under wraps, although when Morales flew to the country for a supposed vacation, there were already reports that he and Pacquiao were going to shoot a commercial for the giant beer company.

Pacquiao shrugged off the animosity that clouded the early days of the shoot when interviewed by a television news show.

Friends outside ring

"We're friends," said Pacquiao of Morales. "Boxing is a business, outside the ring we're friends."

And that friendship is sealed over bottles of San Miguel Beer, or so the ad says. After the staredown, Morales breaks into a smile and raises two bottles of San Miguel's Pale Pilsen brew, and hands one to Pacquiao.

Then, the Mexican boxing legend utters the line that should end up immortalizing the ad: "*Wala kang katulad*, Manny (You are peerless, Manny)."

"The objective of the campaign is for San Miguel to be a catalyst in bringing people together, not just locally but worldwide," a corporate source explained. "With Pacquiao's victory, we thought it was timely. Our concept for the campaign has been reconciliation and friendship. We've been communicating it through the years. And who would best embody reconciliation but Erik Morales and Manny Pacquiao?"

Morales, who also told a news program that he considers Pacquiao a friend, had no qualms signing up for the campaign. But he was concerned about the story line of the ad at the start, the source said.

"The interest of Morales was how the story board was going to look like," said the insider. "We couldn't avoid for him to be adamant, because it's going to be aired in his opponent's turf. It's not that he has something against Manny personally, he was just curious how the story line would come out."

30 takes for 4-word spiel

And then there was the Mexican's speaking line. The source said that it took the three-division champion 30 takes to perfect his four-word spiel.

"As soon as he got his copy sheet, he kept reading it—even in his car, during lunch. Even if it's just one line, his manner of delivery, the syllabication, the inflection is different," the insider said.

Because the ad brings together two of the most sought-after super featherweights in the ring business, speculation was rife as to how much it cost to finance the ad. However, San Miguel officials refused to divulge even a ballpark figure.

McCann Erickson, the agency of the food conglomerate that handled the commercial, signed a confidentiality clause that bars its members from divulging estimates of the production cost.

Most expensive ad

Industry sources, however, said this could easily be one of the most expensive commercials in the history of local television.

A business associate of Pacquiao, who also spoke with the INQUIRER on condition that he not be named, revealed that Morales got P5 million for the commercial while Roach received P2 million.

The associate said taxes for their talent fee were already paid by San Miguel and that Pacquiao and the beverage firm made sure that Morales and Roach did not spend a single centavo during their stay here and during the shoot.

In fact, both were driven to and from the location of the shoot in a pair of luxury cars worth P20 million each.

The source did not reveal Pacquiao's talent fee, although the boxer already has a lucrative pact with San Miguel, which requires him to do commercials for the company.

Pacquiao is San Miguel's biggest endorser, and this is his second commercial with the company after the "Painom" ad with television star Kris Aquino, which was launched in 2005.

Bloopers

And like every film shoot, this one had its share of bloopers.

When Pacquiao and Morales started getting comfortable with each other, the Filipino started coaching his Mexican counterpart, especially with the latter's speaking line.

"But Manny has *punto* (Visayan accent)," said the source. "So *nakukuha din ni* Morales *yung punto* (So Morales would end up speaking with the same accent.)"

Small wonder it took 30 takes to shoot the Morales sound bite.

Because Pacquiao has proven that he can carry himself comfortably in front of the cameras—he already has several commercials to his name—all eyes were on Morales during the shoot. And the future Hall-of-Famer acquitted himself well.

"He was easy to work with, very professional," said the source. "He never complained. He acts well, he works very well with the camera."

Gracious host

In reality, there was little for Morales to complain about once the boxer got over the tension between him and his rival and the cold war that created friction between him and Roach.

Pacquiao was a gracious host, the business associate said, to Morales and wife Andrea, gifting them with a crucifix pendant encrusted in diamonds.

And Morales was warmly accepted by the Filipino people, prompting the Mexican to wonder out loud why he was well loved in a country that is home to his fiercest boxing rival.

"He kept asking me why people continued to mob him," the associate said. "He really expected to be a hated figure here."

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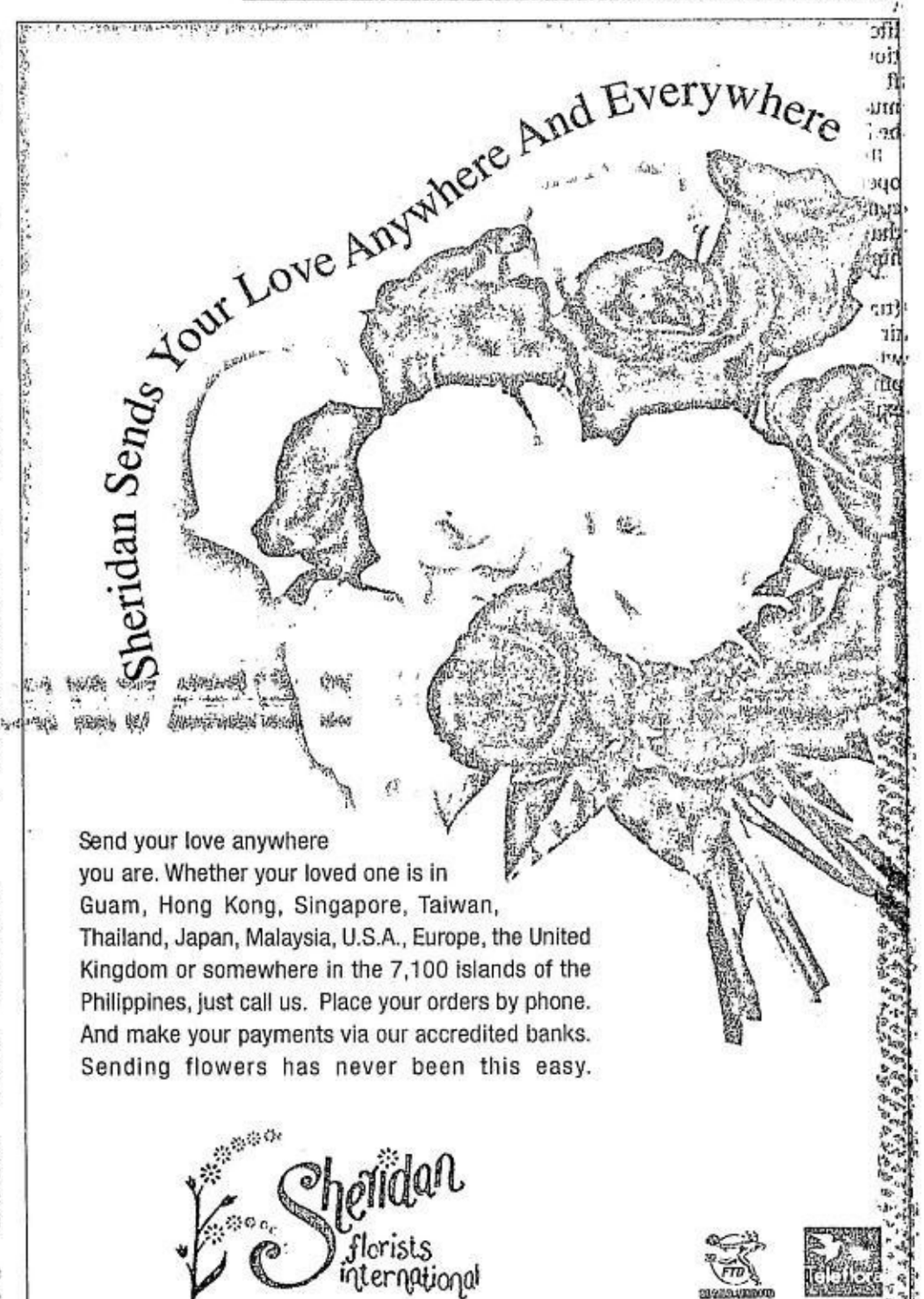

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Rock icon pays tribute to Imelda minus shoes

From page A1

a rock band and a small orchestra.

"This is the place to audition a lot of new material," Byrne told the audience at the start of the show, thanking Carnegie Hall for letting him perform the 23 songs he wrote in collaboration with British deejay Norman Cook, known as Fatboy Slim.

The project, first performed as a song cycle with multimedia elements in Australia last year, is still in development. Byrne recently described it as more akin to a disco opera than a possible Broadway musical.

In skinny black pants and a white shirt, Byrne informed the audience between songs about Imelda Marcos and her life before meeting her husband Ferdinand Marcos, the Philippines' president from 1965 until he fled to Hawaii in 1986.

Like Jackie and Jack

"This is not artistic license, this is reportage," Byrne told a laughing audience as the story moved to Marcos' extravagant visits to New York, where she frequented the famed nightclub "Studio 54."

"She and Ferdinand were like the Jackie and Jack in the Philippines at the time," he said, referring to the former US President John Kennedy and his wife Jacqueline.

Byrne began and finished the set with the title song, "Here Lies Love," which he said was taken from what Marcos wanted quoted on her tombstone.

But he waited until the end of the set to address her infamous and extensive shoe collection.

"As you might have noticed, the shoes were never mentioned," he said, explaining that they were discovered after the Marcos family had fled the Philippines—not the period covered in his work.

"It wasn't just the shoes—there was a whole house of Heinz sandwich spread—but that's another piece right there," he joked, before taking a serious tone to add that the Marcos record also included accomplishments such as building schools.

"Of course things got out of hand, but it's not as simple, whatever, as people might think."

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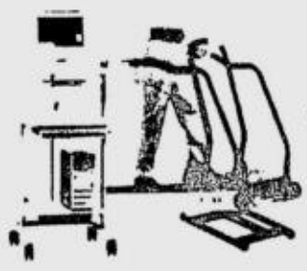

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'Cough up our money!'

Tonyboy Cojuangco was forced last year by the Supreme Court to return 111,415 shares of the Philippine Telecommunication Investment Corp. (PTIC) for their being part of the ill-gotten Marcos wealth.

All's well that ends well, right?

No sir! There is still the unfinished business of collecting from Tonyboy the dividends that accrued from the PTIC shares. He's not yet off the hook, until he coughs up money that belongs to the Filipino people.

And how much does Tonyboy owe us in dividends? Up to 1993 alone, then Rep. Joker Arroyo estimated it at $500 million. In Congress, Arroyo railed at Tonyboy's family emerging as the "richest" in the Philippines, at the expense of poor Filipinos.

"In the Fortune and Forbes listing of the richest families in the world, only the Ayalas were listed but they [unlike the family of Tonyboy Cojuangco] did not reach the $300 million mark," said Arroyo then. "What we are talking about is $500 million... we cannot treat this as a laughing matter."

We, the people, are not laughing either.

Tonyboy must now owe us billions of dollars in dividends he got from the ill-gotten shares. **Justice has to prevail: Tonyboy should be made to return what does not belong to him!**

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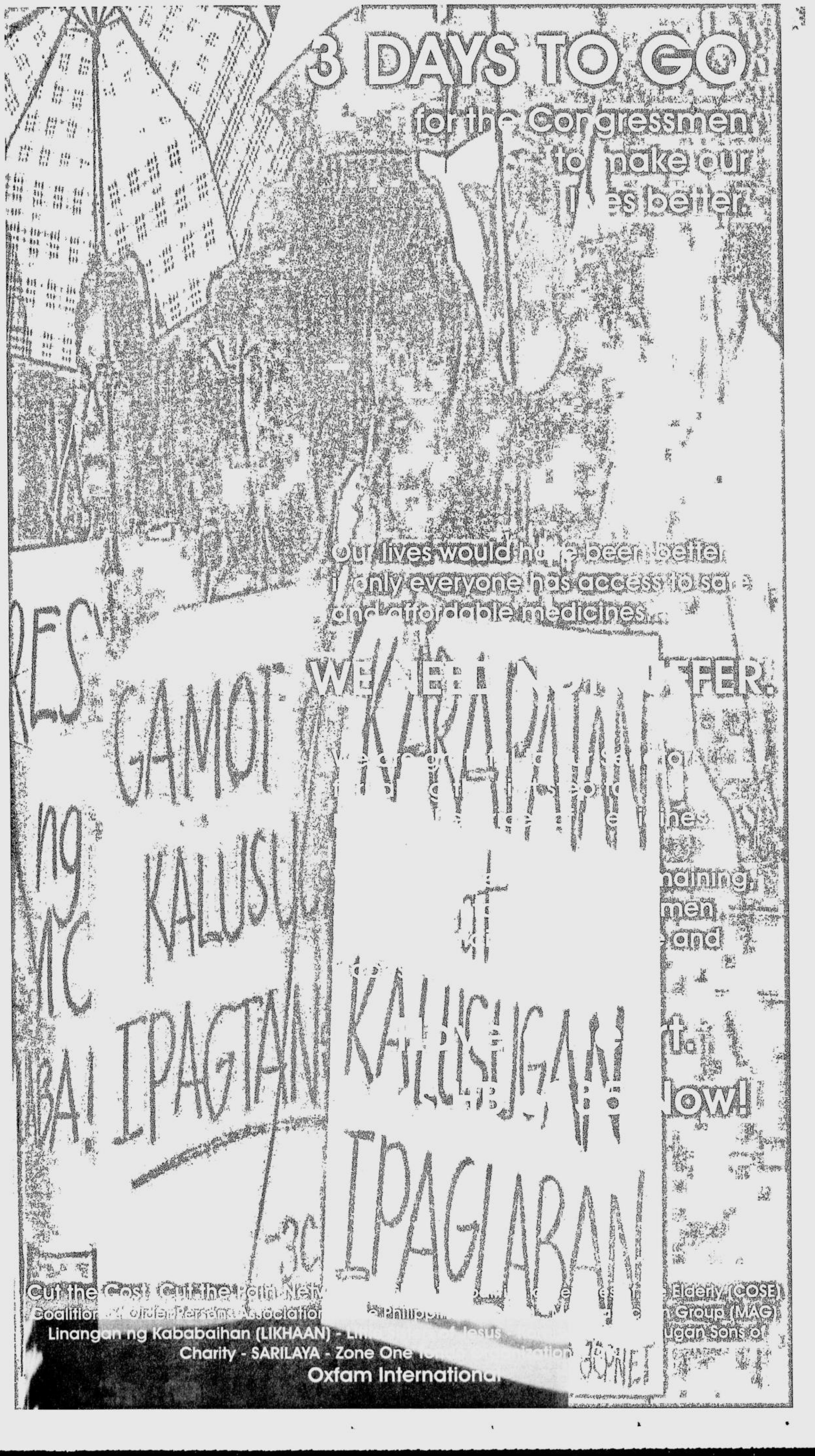
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Repeat of Bautista massacre feared

By Fe Zamora

JOLO, SULU—THE FEAR OF A REpeat of the massacre of a general and his men was constantly playing in the minds of officials who worked to resolve the case of Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Muslim Mindanao police chief Joel Goltiao said yesterday.

"We were worried that it would take so long, that it would become a crisis. We had to think of the lessons learned from the Bautista massacre," Goltiao told the INQUIRER.

Goltiao said he was a lieutenant in the Philippine Constabulary assigned here when Brig. Gen. Teodulfo Bautista, then chief of the Army 1st Infantry Division, was killed along with his men on Patah Island in Patikul 31 years ago.

"We didn't want to lose the gains in confidence-building we've had with the Muslims. At the same time, there are lessons learned such as personal security," he said.

Goltiao noted that Dolorfino did not seem to worry about his personal security as the police chief jokingly said, "Dolorfino has become the spokesperson of the MNLF (Moro National Liberation Front)."

Goltiao and Dolorfino are both 1976 graduates of the Philippine Military Academy.

Dolorfino has converted to Islam and married a Muslim woman. "I think he has assimilated the culture," Goltiao said, explaining Dolorfino's ease in entering the MNLF camp.

But Dolorfino's closeness with the MNLF did not transfer to other Marines. The MNLF camp in Bitanag, Patikul, was overrun by government troops in early 2005.

Lieutenant Colonel Villanueva, an Army battalion commander, died from loss of blood from wounds he suffered during battles to retake the camp. But soon after, the camp was returned to the MNLF.

MNLF releases general, 20 others

From page A1

The release came after the government had satisfied one of the MNLF group's other "conditions."

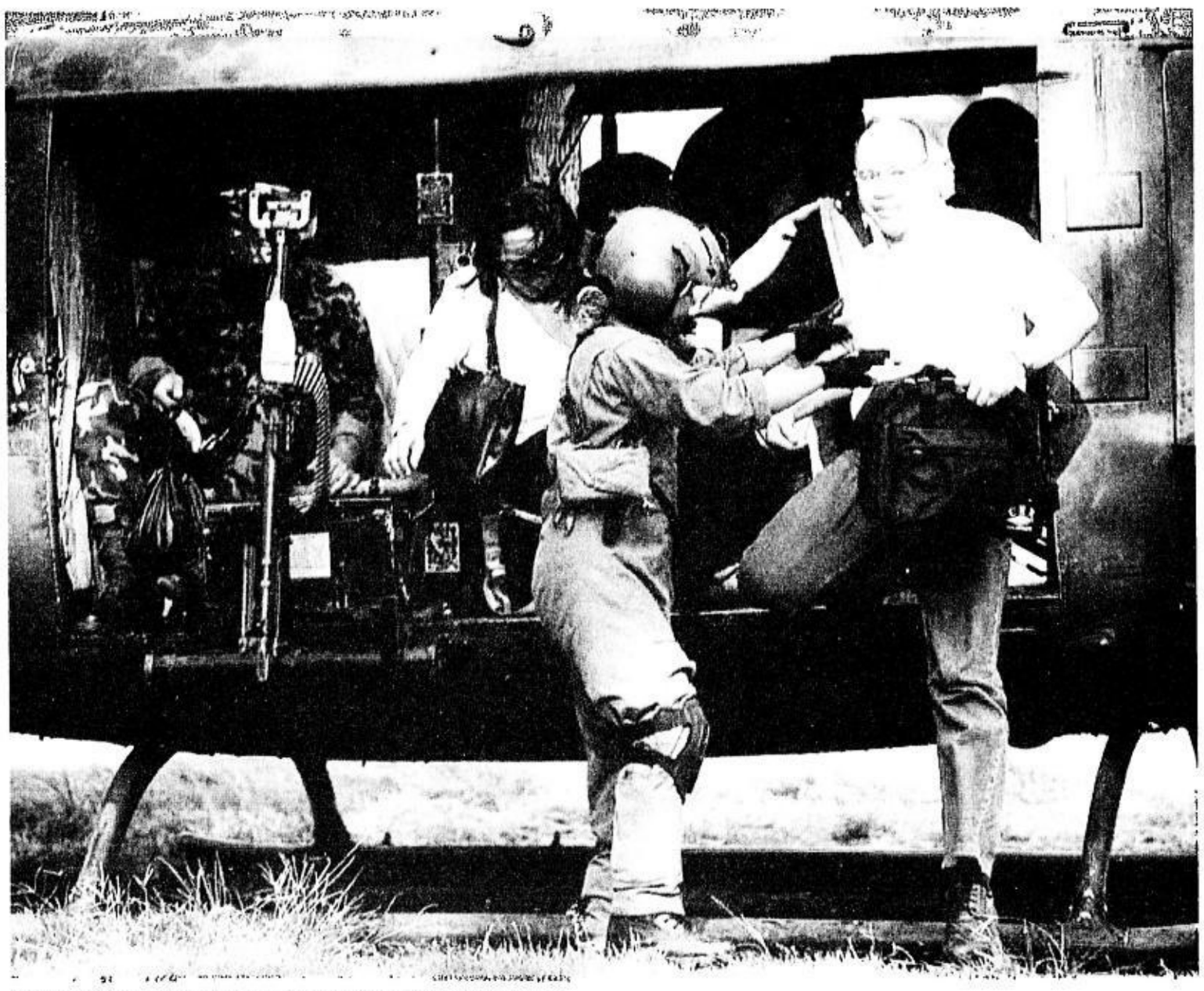
This was an official assurance that the preparatory tripartite talks would push through in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in March involving the government, the MNLF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The tripartite talks will discuss issues related to the implementation of the 1996 peace agreement between Manila and the MNLF.

Malik, in a phone interview, said OIC Ambassador Kassem El-masry called him on Saturday and assured him that the meeting would push through.

"He said the schedule for the tripartite meeting had been agreed on," Malik said.

The government again insisted yesterday that Dolorfino and his companions had not been taken hostage but could not satisfactorily explain the general's statements to the media on Saturday that they were being prevented from leaving camp.



DOLORFINO and his entourage arrive at Camp Bautista in Bustos, Jolo. PHOTOS BY KEM ZAMORA

'Virtual hostages'

Dolorfino came closest to saying what seemed apparent. He told The Associated Press by phone before they were released that they were being "virtually held as hostages."

Dolorfino's team said Malik prepared sumptuous food and fruits for them during their two days' stay in the camp.

Yesterday, their "hosts" slaughtered a cow for their lunch.

"The joke was we were not taken hostage, but we were hosted," said Dolorfino, whose party included 11 soldiers.

Former Mindanao State University Chancellor Dr. Sammy Adju, who was in Dolorfino's group, said the MNLF camp was surrounded by more than 1,000 armed men.

The place, called Camp Bitan-ag, had been renamed Camp Dennis Villanueva after the government took control of it but became Camp Bitan-ag again when the government handed it back to the MNLF.

Dolorfino said he and his group wanted to leave the MNLF camp earlier yesterday to assure the public that they were not being harmed, but they didn't want to embarrass their hosts by leaving without feasting on the slaughtered cow.

Malik himself denied his men had taken Dolorfino's group hostage, claiming the reason Dolorfino's team stayed in the camp for two days was the long discussion they had about peace in Sulu.

MNLF, not Abu Sayyaf

Dolorfino's group was on a peace mission to look into reports that soldiers had engaged MNLF men—and not Abu Sayyaf bandits, as earlier claimed by the military—during heavy fighting on Jan. 18 in Sulu.

At least 10 gunmen were killed during the clash.

Dolorfino said everything went smoothly in their early phase of the talks on Friday, but Malik blew his top when Santos gave a briefing on the tripartite meeting.

"That was when the situation became not too good," Dolorfino said.

He refused to give details of what happened when Santos gave his briefing.

Malik's group, which is loyal to jailed MNLF Chair Nur Misuari, wants their leader freed so he could attend the tripartite meeting.

"We got nervous because Ustadz (Malik) was really angry. But he is smiling now," Dolorfino said before his release.

Dureza said it was made clear to Malik that there would be a tripartite meeting.

"They were so frustrated when they saw an item in a newspaper saying that the tripartite had been scrapped ... That was the reason they were so upset and they thought the government was not sincere," Dureza said.

Dolorfino said Malik told him the repeated postponement of the tripartite talks also affected the MNLF's credibility with its followers.

"He told us that they had been losing face in the eyes of their members because the tripartite meeting was always being postponed," Dolorfino said.

"He told us many things were happening on the ground. Some members got killed because of the absence of a mechanism between the MNLF and the troops on the ground. So he told us we could not leave the camp until the issue of the tripartite was resolved."

Dolorfino recounted how his team ended up being detained.

He said that when his group bade farewell to Malik after two hours of talks on Friday, Malik told him they could not leave until there was an assurance the tripartite talks would push through.

"Suddenly he declared that we couldn't leave," Dolorfino said, according to The Associated Press. "It was very tense. Although what they did was against our will, we understood their plight."

"We were virtually held as hostages ...We were used as leverage."

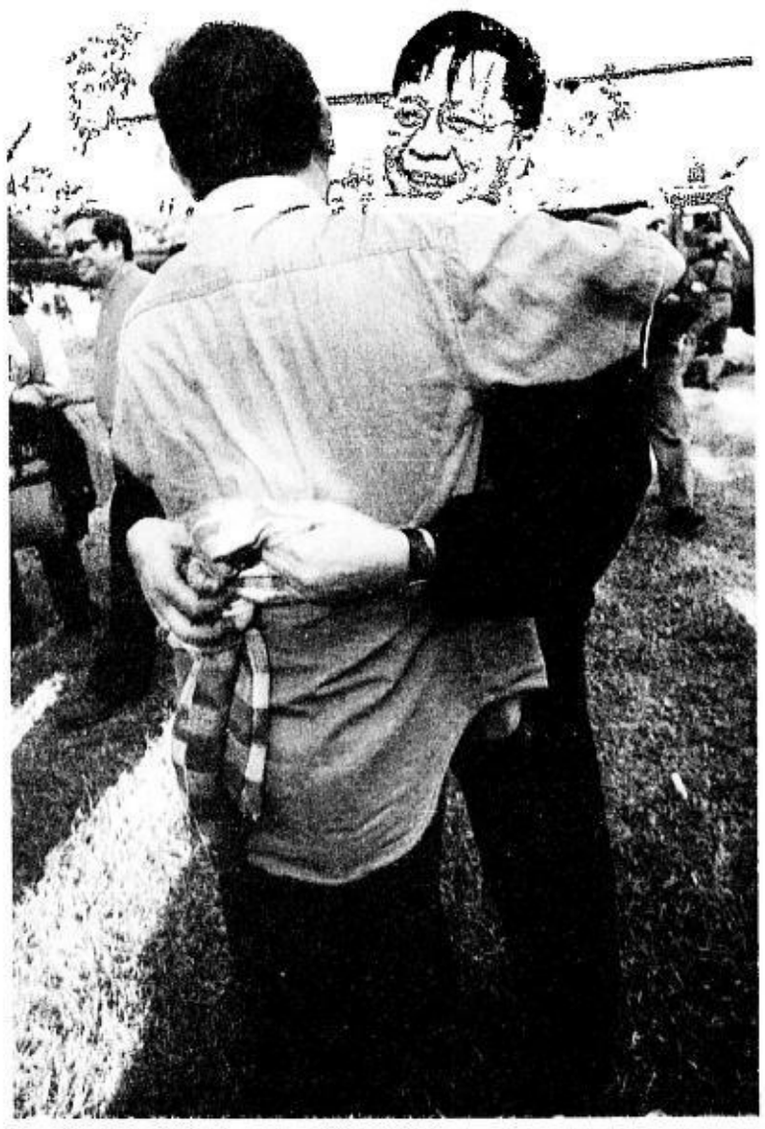
Drawing attention

Malik denied taking Dolorfino's group hostage, but acknowledged that the rebels "had to do something to catch the government's attention on the non-implementation of the 1996 peace agreement."

The MNLF was the largest Muslim separatist group in Mindanao until it decided to go for autonomy and signed the 1996 peace accord with Manila.

Many of its members later accused the government of reneging on its promises to deliver political and economic concessions.

With a report from AP



UNDERSECRETARY Ramon Santos gets a tight embrace from Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong in Camp Bautista.

Dolorfino: One silent peacemaker

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—HE IS known as the most quiet military officer in the Philippine Marines.

Whenever there are top government and military officials or foreign diplomats around, Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino prefers to stay and listen in the background, unless he is directly asked to speak his mind.

He is admired—even envied—by officers from both the the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front.

At Camp Teodulfo Bautista, headquarters of Task Force Comet, which is in charge of military operations in the Sulu islands, Dolorfino is often referred to jokingly as the deputy commander of MNLF Chair Nur Misuari.

"That's OK, if that makes them happy. It's also an honor being associated with a respected official," Dolorfino told the INQUIRER in May 2006 while he was trying to set up a dialogue between the AFP and the MNLF.

Embracing Islam

A Muslim convert, Dolorfino has also taken the name Ben Muhammad. He admits that embracing Islam has widened his perspective and understanding of the Mindanao conflict.

The author of a paper titled "Sulu's Road Map: A Journey to Peace and Development," Dolorfino has been labeled as one of the few "officers who think out of the military box."

"Societal problems, although multidimensional in nature, always manifest themselves in the military box in the form of peace and order problems (i.e. insurgency, terrorism, criminality, clan wars and ethnic violence). The usual paradigm would be the military approach," Dolorfino stated in his presentation of his Sulu study.

More Dolorfinos, please

When a proposed meeting in May 2006 between Joint Task Force Comet and the MNLF's Ustadz Habier Malik Group hit a snag, top MNLF leaders like Julhambri Misuari stood behind Dolorfino and defended him.

That meeting had been called to discuss security arrangements in connection with the visit to Sulu of diplomats from the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

"We are praying for more of the likes of Dolorfino in the AFP," Misuari said. "His character and determination to achieve peace is invaluable. We love and admire him more for his fairness and openness."

Ms Arroyo's pet

Dolorfino, now head of the National Capital Region Command, is also one of the favored military officers of President Macapagal-Arroyo because of his contributions to bringing armed rebels to the negotiating table to resolve a conflict between the military and Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas in Central Mindanao in 2005.

He once served as Task Force Ranao commander and deputy commander of the then Southern Command.

During a State of the Nation Address, Ms Arroyo acknowledged Dolorfino's efforts in dealing with the MNLF in Sulu in order to pave the way for more development projects on the island, to include the entry of US humanitarian missions.

Mutual respect

Thus, Presidential Adviser Jesus Dureza was puzzled when Dolorfino and Undersecretary Ramon Santos were detained at the MNLF camp by Moro rebels that included the group of Malik.

"Dolorfino and Santos often go in and out of their camp," Dureza said, referring to the mutual respect between Dolorfino and Malik.

Gov't may allow Nur's provisional release

From page A1

of the MNLF,'" Ermita said.

He was referring to the split in the MNLF leadership, one faction of which had voted to remove Misuari from the MNLF Central Committee.

MNLF insists on Misuari

Yamsuan gave no details on when or where the meeting will be held, or who will represent each side.

MNLF leader Ustadz Habier Malik, who led a group that detained a government peace team in an MNLF camp in Jolo over the weekend, said the other day that the Moro front expected Misuari to head its delegation to the tripartite talks.

The talks involving the government, the MNLF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference are expected to discuss problems related to the 1996 peace deal between Manila and the MNLF.

Malik said that Misuari was the Filipino leader officially recognized by the OIC and that without his presence, the talks—proposed to be held in Jeddah—would have little meaning.

Nothing definite

In an interview, Yamsuan said it was not yet definite if Misuari would be allowed to attend the talks.

He would not comment either on what effect Misuari's release would have on his court cases.

Misuari, a former governor of the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, has been under house arrest since mid-2006 in New Manila, Quezon City, near St. Luke's Medical Center, where he was previously confined after complaining of various ailments, including hypertension.

He is facing rebellion charges in connection with an uprising by his followers in Jolo, Sulu, in November 2001.

March 17 date

Until a Makati City court placed him under house arrest, Misuari had been detained at Fort Santo Domingo in Laguna since 2002.

MNLF concerns over whether the tripartite meeting would push through was among the reasons that caused the detention of Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino's group by Malik's forces.

Ermita said Malik wanted definite information about the tripartite meeting, including when it would take place, "and took advantage of the occasion."

Talks in Jeddah

Ermita said the MNLF was told the meeting would push through but this would be preceded by preparatory talks in Jeddah on March 17.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said the government was committed to fully implementing the 1996 peace agreement.

"We acknowledge that there are outstanding issues with the MNLF that have to be resolved under the principles of continuity and comprehensiveness of the peace process," he said.

No quick fixes

"While there are no quick fixes to the age-old Mindanao conflict, nonetheless, we are moving forward to a final peace through principled negotiations, socioeconomic amelioration, focused security measures and international cooperation."

Bunye also stressed that the government was equally committed to concluding a peace pact with the rival Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

With a report from PDI Research

Priests are human, too ...

From page A1

priest mistakenly anointed not the baby's forehead but the mother's breast. No wonder his thumb pressed on something soft, he later realized.

In a separate ceremony, another priest committed a similar blooper.

But the mother, who was not familiar with the Christian rite, found nothing irregular about it. She went back to the priest and offered her other breast.

In still another blooper, the host fell between a woman's cleavage during communion. Instinctively, the priest moved to retrieve the sacred bread, but the woman shrieked and almost created a scandal.

Priests are human beings, too.

While blunders—like a priest raising the chalice instead of the host during consecration—may be funny, they shouldn't distract parishioners from the greater value of their faith and community, according to Fr. Glenn Gomez, SVD.

"Yes, they're funny and they only show that priests are human beings, too," he told the INQUIRER yesterday.

Apparently, there's a need to demystify the common notion that priests, being ordained ministers, are infallible.

This perception probably explains why mistakes committed by priests—or simply the possibility of committing them—are difficult to accept for many parishioners, said Gomez, who holds a doctorate in Psychology from Ateneo de Manila University.

It's not to say, of course, that the idea should give men of the cloth license to do wrong.

Gomez said priests were basically faced with two extremes in their relations with their flock.

On the one hand, some express "too much humanity," immersing themselves in the world of their flock to the point of acquiring their vices.

On the other, others remain reclusive, convinced that serving God means staying within the privacy of a priory.

Balance

"There has to be balance," said Gomez.

On Friday night, the INQUIRER sat down with a group of priests and seminarians whose conversation wandered to the lighter side of the priestly ministry.

One seminarian recalled attending Mass in one province where the priest raised the microphone instead of the chalice. Lesson: Don't hold anything in both hands at the same time.

Pong

On another occasion, an old priest, who loved playing "mah jong" for leisure, fell asleep during Mass. When the *sacristan* (acolyte) woke him up, he inexplicably shouted, "Pong," a mah jong term.

At a wedding in an upscale village in Makati, one officiating priest's legendary temper got the better of him.

Known to be a stickler for punctuality, he was incensed when the bride showed up late. When the woman finally arrived and looked apologetically in the direction of the priest, she got an unsavory comment.

"*Ang tagal-tagal, ang pangit-pangit naman*! (She's late and she's ugly, too)," the priest said.

During the ceremony, the priest drew not a few dagger looks from friends and relatives of the bride and groom.

Idiosyncrasies

After the wedding, the priest thought it best to skip the reception at a nearby five-star hotel.

"Being human beings, priests have emotions and idiosyncrasies, too," Gomez said. "These things don't leave them after ordination."

Gomez has had his share of embarrassing moments.

About two years ago, he was asked to say a requiem Mass in Quezon City. He asked the family to write on a piece of paper the first name of the deceased followed by the bereaved loved ones.

Before he could finish praying "for the soul of Francisco," the family shouted almost in unison—"Guillermo!" It turned out that one relative had not followed the instructions. Francisco was the bereaved brother.

Humor

Humor is a potent tool for evangelization, especially in the Philippines where the faithful generally enjoy jokes and colorful anecdotes, according to Gomez.

"We're unlike the Germans who are heavy thinkers," he explained. "Pinoys love lively sermons."

Understandably so, because for all the problems confronting the Filipino Catholic, the last thing he wants is to be in the company of a "colorless" priest.

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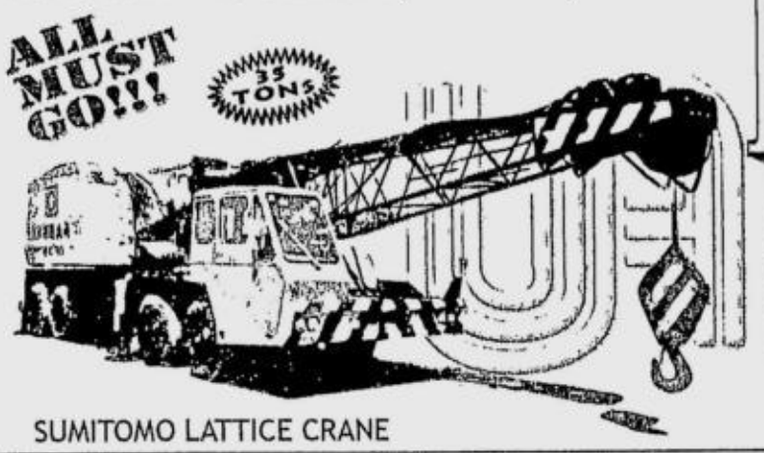

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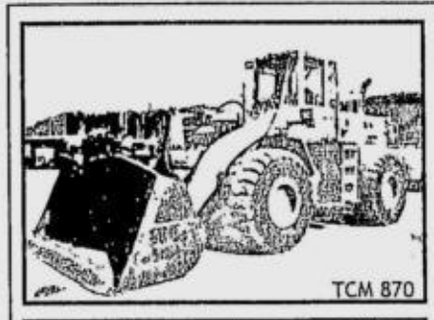
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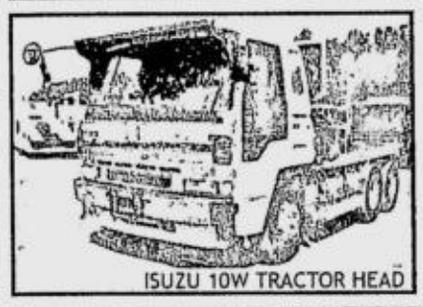
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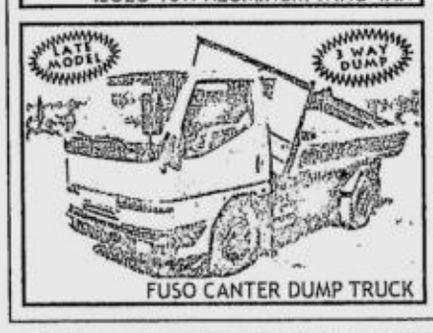

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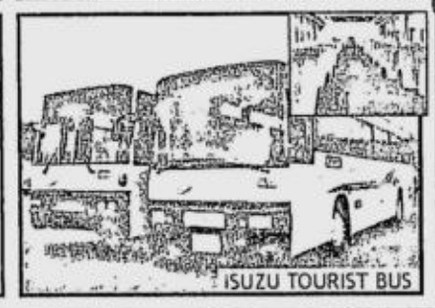
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RP maids rally anew

From page A1

same number of protesters were prevented from proceeding to Admiralty and had to stay on Chater Road because Harcourt Garden could no longer accommodate the crowd.

Unlike the first Sunday of protests—Jan. 28—there was an increased police presence at Admiralty to direct the traffic of protesting Filipinos.

Ma Yiu-cho, Hong Kong police liaison officer, said yesterday's protest was more organized than the first. He placed the number of protesters at 2,000.

If approved, the new rules will require maids who work overseas to undergo a two- or three-week "competency training and assessment program" recognized by the Overseas Workers Welfare Administration (Owwa) at a cost of P10,000-P15,000 ($215-$320).

Maids in Hong Kong typically earn about $450 a month.

Brion defends rules

In Manila, Labor Secretary Arturo Brion defended the new rules as part of reforms to give maids better protection amid a number of high-profile cases of abuse against them, especially in Saudi Arabia and Singapore.

"The reforms that we have been implementing are for the long-term and would place the [maids] on a better footing against abuse and exploitation abroad," he said.

"I appeal to our [overseas Filipino workers] not to be misled by some quarters in their veiled attempt to discredit the reforms that we have set in place," Brion said.

On Friday, the POEA, aside from lowering the minimum age for overseas household service workers from 25 to 23, declared that those with work visas, contracts that were being processed or verified job orders between Dec. 16 and March 1 were also exempted from training and skills assessment as well as from the US$400 basic pay.

Those leaving for another country and whose contracts were finished in 2006 can go back before March 1. They are covered by the $400 minimum salary but not by the skills assessment and certification by the Technical Education Skills and Development Authority (Tesda).

Brion said the revision of some of the rules was not the result of the protests but of consultations with all stakeholders. In fact, he said, the reformed guidelines have so far netted 545 new contracts for domestics in Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the Middle East.

"Filipinos here are not like kids who are given candy and are expected to be happy. We want to know: What is the truth behind this new policy? This is another source of corruption," Robles said.

The appeal of a Chinese employer and stories of domestic helpers who had passed the assessment tests but lost their jobs in Hong Kong because of their late arrival were the highlight of yesterday's protest.

Jovy Uy Zabala, who has worked here for eight years, brought to the rally her certificate of competency from Owwa, which conducts the language and culture exams, and the National Certificate for Household Service Workers from Tesda, which tests the workers' domestic skills.

Zabala, who flew in on Jan. 30, is now jobless. Her employer refused to take her in because she had sought too many extensions of her date of arrival as she waited for her certificates.

Now technically a tourist in Hong Kong, Zabala has nine days to find a new employer or she would have to return to the Philippines, not only jobless but penniless.

The Cagayan de Oro native, who said she has a child in college to support, narrated how she had spent P25,000 to go to Manila for the tests, only to lose her job in Hong Kong.

Catsup and oyster sauce

As part of the assessment tests, Zabala was asked by Tesda to clean a toilet for five minutes, cook beef stew for 15 minutes and prepare a Russian table setting.

She was also asked questions like "What kind of scrub will you use for rough floors?"

Zabala said she tried to explain to the Tesda people that unlike Russian dinner fare, the Chinese did not use catsup in their beef stew but oyster sauce but the Manila examiners were adamant. "So I had to do their bidding so I could pass the test," she said in Filipino.

She said the Owwa had interviewed her in Cantonese for the language assessment test but she repeatedly told them in English that she could not understand the language. She said her employers had wanted her to speak in English so they, too, could learn. She passed the Owwa test. *With a report from AFP*

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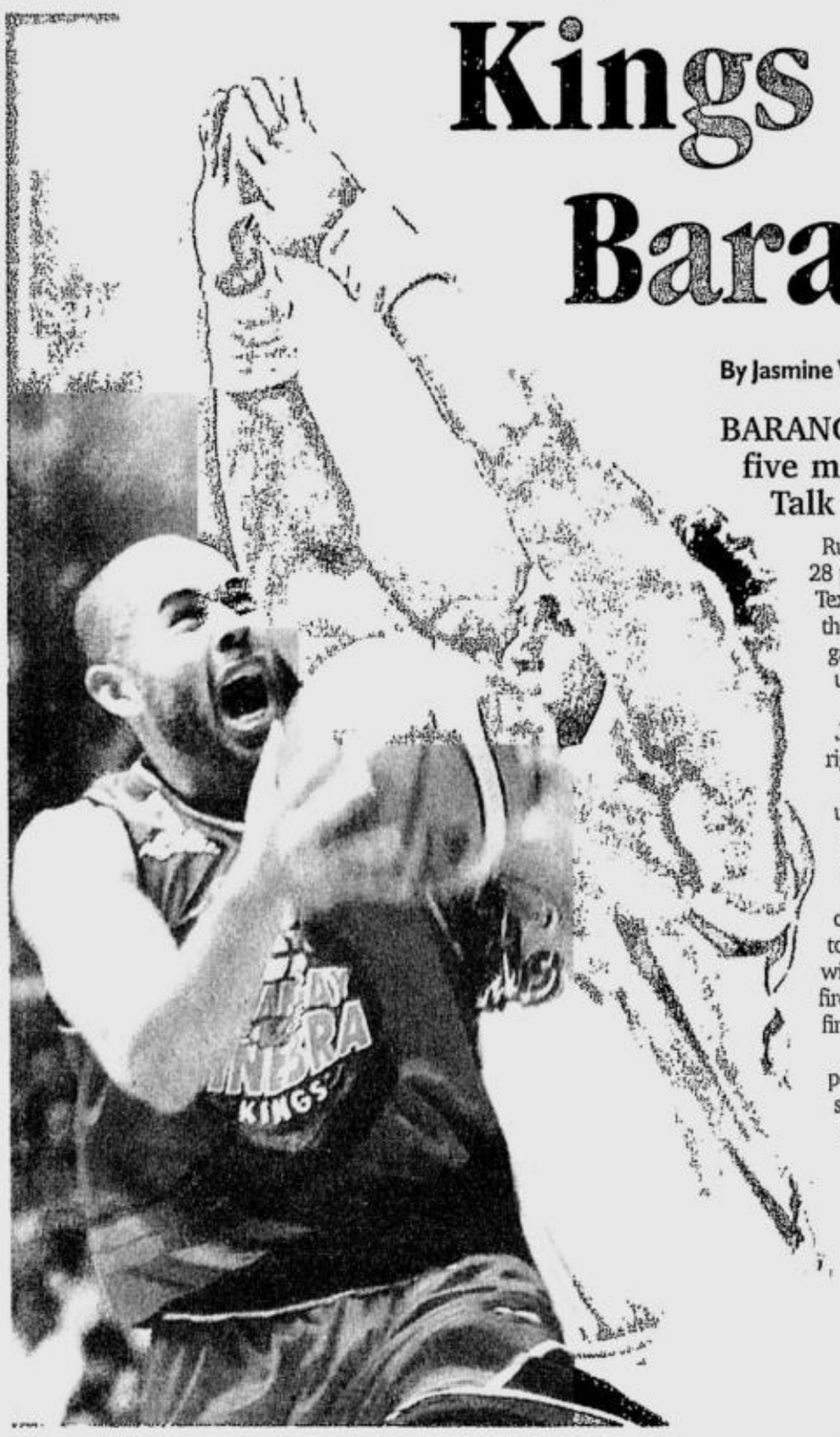
SPORTS

Kings reach finals; Barako stay alive



GINEBRA workhorse Rudy Hatfield drives to the basket, makes the shot and draws a foul from Asi Taulava for a three-point play that highlighted his heroics last night. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By Jasmine W. Payo

BARANGAY GINEBRA PICKED UP THE PACE IN THE FINAL five minutes and secured a ticket to the title series of the Talk 'N Text PBA Philippine Cup.

Rudy Hatfield fired a second career-best 28 points as the Kings repulsed the Talk 'N Text Phone Pals, 98-89, last night to clinch their best-of-seven semifinal series in six games at the jampacked Araneta Coliseum.

"It was a tough game," said coach Jong Uichico. "We just made a run at the right time in the fourth quarter."

Ginebra's title rival will not be known until Wednesday after Red Bull dragged San Miguel Beer to a deciding Game 7 with a 104-100 victory.

The Barako survived the ejection of coach Yeng Guiao in the second quarter to forge a 3-3 deadlock in their own series with the Beermen as Celino Cruz caught fire to preside over a rampaging Red Bull finish.

Cruz unloaded nine of his team-high 19 points in an 18-5 Barako run down the stretch and his two free throws clinched the win, time down to 4.1 seconds.

Guiao was thrown out after incurring successive technical fouls, the first for elbowing Dondon Hontiveros with 4:04 left in the second quarter. SMB assistant coaches Pido Jarencio and Biboy Ravanes confronted Guiao as a result of the incident, leading to the second technical that banished the Red Bull coach.

"What comes to my mind is that there's Divine justice," said Guiao later. "We showed a lot of character. The warriors in the guys, that's what set us apart from the others. The guys just vindicated me in this game."

"Hontiveros bumped into me and I protected myself," Guiao added, explaining his altercation with the SMB forward. "I don't understand why I was given two technical fouls."

With Mark Caguioa sidelined by cramps in the last four minutes, Hatfield sparked an 11-0 rally that Sunday Salvacion capped with a triple as the Kings forged ahead, 90-83, with 2:44 minutes remaining, from 79-83.

Clinching a finals berth was a vindication for Uichico, who gave up his coaching job at San Miguel Beer to give way to national coach Chot Reyes at the start of the season. He took over Ginebra from Siot Tanquingcen.

For Ginebra, it will be its 16th overall title bid and first Finals appearance since the 2004-2005 Philippine Cup.

The scores:

First Game

GINEBRA 98—Hatfield 28, Caguioa 15, Tubid 13, Salvacion 13, Mamaril 9, Reavis 8, Helterbrand 5, Holper 4, Abarrientos 3, Macapagal 0

TALK 'N TEXT 89—Washington 21, Alapag 19, Cardona 12, Taulava 11, Ritualo 11, Carey 5, De Ocampo 5, Belano 3, Noble 2, Fran 0.

Quarters: 15-21, 42-48, 71-66, 98-89

Second Game

RED BULL 104—Cruz 19, Baguio 18, Villanueva 18, Najorda 15, Fonacier 7, Alvarez 7, Valenzuela 6, Robinson 5, Pennisi 5, Sharma 4.

SAN MIGUEL 100—Seigle 22, Tudage 16, Hontiveros 16, Ildefonso 16, Pena 10, Calaguio 6, Gonales 5, Racela 4, Tenorio 3, Adducul 2, Wilson 0.

Quarters: 37-32, 50-53, 70-81, 104-100

Pacquiao-Chi clash in peril, says Roach

THE PLANNED APRIL SHOWDOWN BE tween Manny Pacquiao and Korean In jin Chi seems in jeopardy after Bob Arum decided to cancel his trip to Macau for what would have been exploratory talks with Wynn Macau executives for the holding of the fight.

Arum was scheduled to fly to Macau today, but Pacquiao associate Rex "Wakee" Salud, said the American promoter decided to shelve the trip.

ROACH

"He called me up to say he was cancelling the trip," Salud said.

Meanwhile, American trainer Freddie Roach also told boxing website Fightbeat.com that he had heard of the Pacquiao-Chi fallout, and that a new South African opponent has been tapped to face the Filipino champion.

"They were talking about it but I heard Chi fell out," said Roach. "Now they have a South African opponent and the guy is 16-6 or something like that. How are you gonna sell that?"

Roach, Pacquiao's trainer, also lashed at Arum for criticizing his decision to go to Puerto Rico to train Oscar De la Hoya for his fight with Floyd Mayweather. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Dream field vies in Makati International Derby today

A DREAM LINEUP THAT INCLUDES SEVERAL world champions sees action today as the Makati International 8-Cock Super Derby gets going at Makati Coliseum. Promoters Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. have gathered practically all international champions in the past two months, bannered by the team of former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Gov. Ito Ynares and Richard Bates, winners in the Cavite International Derby last December.

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Binay to Lapid: Welcome to Makati

Makati mayor confident 'thinking voters' will support him

By Tarra Quismundo

BRING IT ON.

A day after Sen. Lito Lapid formally announced his intention to seek the mayoral post in Makati, his toughest rival, incumbent Mayor Jejomar Binay, welcomed his entry into the electoral contest.

At the same time, he expressed confidence that Makati residents would reelect him into office for his third and final term, based on his track record.

"To Mr. Lapid of Pampanga, welcome to Makati," Binay said yesterday in a statement. "In the end, it will be about vision and performance. Given a fair fight, I am confident that the people of Makati will again show their confidence in my leadership,"

"In a democracy, anyone who meets the minimum residency requirement can run for public office. Mr. Lapid has always been a Pampanga resident but he was able to comply with the residency requirement set by law," he added.

Lapid, best known for his portrayal on the big screen of hero-on-horseback Leon Guerrero, finally confirmed on Saturday night reports that he would run for mayor of Makati City, the country's financial capital.

It was earlier reported that the former Pampanga governor was persuaded by President Macapagal-Arroyo, who is also a Pampangueño, to challenge Binay in the May local elections.

His premise for running, as Lapid himself said in a previous interview, was to put a stop to anti-administration rallies being held in the financial center. Binay is the president of the United Opposition.

"Makati is a center of business and protest rallies have no place in that city because these affect economic progress," Lapid had stressed.

To meet the residency requirement, Lapid bought a house on J. Victor Street in Barangay Pio del Pilar.

On Saturday night when he declared his political plan, a mini concert was held in the neighborhood with about 100 residents in attendance.

"I have always maintained that Mr. Lapid is just a stand-in for Ms Arroyo," said Binay, who added that he was preparing for "all types of dirty tricks and special operations" the administration would likely use to secure his opponent's win.

While he believed the Arroyo "regime" was "known for breaking the rules," Binay, however, said he was giving the President the benefit of the doubt: "We are praying that the Arroyo administration will respect the voice of the people of Makati."

At the same time, however, he made a jab about possible legal problems Lapid would soon be facing.

Lapid and his son, Mark, who was elected governor when his father ran for a seat in the Senate, may soon be respondents in a graft case that several Pampanga mayors reportedly plan to file against them in connection with allegedly anomalous construction projects in the province.

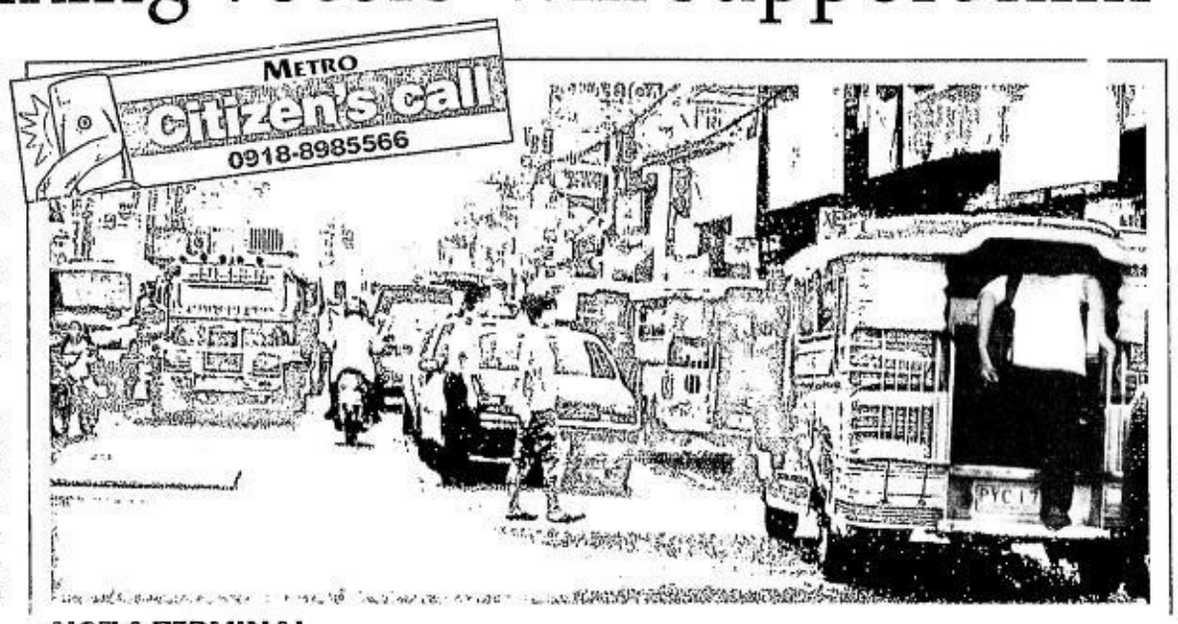
"But given Mr. Lapid's political problems in his home province of Pampanga, I just hope that he will find the time to tell the people of Makati his programs should he be elected mayor," Binay said.

In the end, he added, the fight will boil down to the candidate's knack for governance, especially in a city with a business sector known to be very discerning about the local chief executive's managerial skills.

Binay noted that business, civic and community groups have begun organizing forums where candidates can announce their platform.

"Aside from public services, the business groups are interested in knowing how the candidates will enhance Makati's reputation as a financial center and a hub for information technology-related services. I hope to see Mr. Lapid in these gatherings," he said.

"Makati voters are thinking voters. They listen to what candidates are saying. They scrutinize the qualifications and track record in government of the candidates," Binay added.



NOT A TERMINAL
From reader Mario Sana, 41, of Sta. Ana, Manila: Attention, Mayor Jejomar Binay! Please install a steel fence at the corner of Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo) and J.P. Rizal Street in Makati City. Jeepneys plying the Mantrade, PRC and Cartimar route bound for Makati use this area as a terminal during rush hour, causing traffic jams. It would help if a traffic enforcer is assigned to handle the flow of vehicles in the area. RYAN LIM

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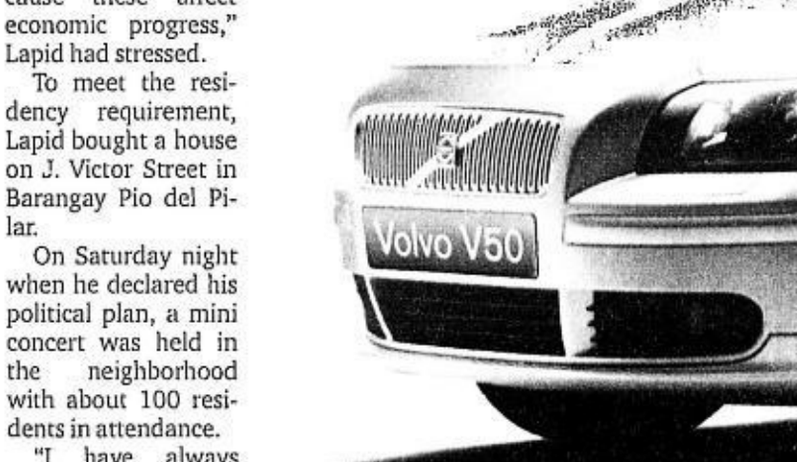

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Heavy weekend traffic on Edsa to continue

By Tarra V. Quismundo

DRIVING ALONG EDSA IN THE coming weeks? Fill up your gas tank and stock up on patience.

Motorists can continue to expect heavy traffic on the major thoroughfare in the coming weekends as the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has scheduled road repairs until March.

The MMDA Metro Base said yesterday that the agency was set to undertake sectional repairs on damaged portions of the 54-km road until next month, with weekly construction work beginning at 10 p.m. Friday until 6 a.m. Monday.

Instead of losing their temper, motorists and commuters should try to exercise a little patience as the repairs are being carried out for their benefit, MMDA traffic chief Angelito Vergel de Dios said.

"Motorists get angry when we do repairs on weekdays. It's a weekend anyway. Most people do not have to go to work or go to school and for those going to the mall, you don't really have to hurry," Vergel de Dios, executive director of the MMDA Traffic Operations Center, added.

He said the agency scheduled the road repairs during weekends to avoid aggravating the already heavy traffic from Monday to Friday.

Vergel de Dios explained the three-day work schedule: Workers dig up the section to be repaired on Friday, they pour cement at dawn Saturday and then reopen the lane on Monday morning after the cement has dried.

Last Saturday, the repair work caused traffic to build up on the north and southbound lanes of Edsa in the morning and afternoon.

Concrete repaving was undertaken on portions of Edsa's northbound and southbound sides near Muñoz market, the outermost lane of the southbound service road between Monte de Piedad Street and Aurora Boulevard in Cubao, Quezon City, and the third lane on the southbound side near the Metro Rail Transit Station on Boni Avenue and the Guadalupe Bridge.

The situation, however, improved yesterday as light to moderate traffic was observed on Edsa.

MetroBriefs

Thieves steal computers

TAKING advantage of the darkness, burglars struck in Marikina City and carted away P250,000 worth of computers yesterday, police said. Police said owner Lara Rayos, 27, discovered the theft when she was about to open the Cyril and Simon Computer Shop yesterday morning. The door had been forcibly opened. Ten computers were already missing. Police said the thieves could have broken in between 3 a.m. and 5 a.m. yesterday. A neighbor told the police he saw a van parked in front of the shop at about 5:30 a.m.

Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

Fake shoes seized

OPERATIVES of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) seized P1.5 million worth of counterfeit Vans rubber shoes during simultaneous raids conducted in Pasay City last week. Agents of the NBI Intellectual Property Rights Division (IPRD) headed by lawyer Jose Justo Yap raided the stockrooms of Aho Tan in Alok Building at 3030 Agtarap Street. The operations were conducted after NBI agents placed the establishments under surveillance and conducted test buys to confirm the evidence gathered by Orion Support Incorporated (OSI), a market research firm representing Vans. Charges of trademark infringement under the Intellectual Property Code of the Philippines or Republic Act 8293 are being prepared against the owner of the raided establishments.

Margaux C. Ortiz

Pro-life Month activities

PRO-LIFE Philippines has announced its lineup of activities for February which is Pro-life Month. Today is Pro-life Sunday—the start of "Respect and Care for Life Week." All are invited to join the healing Mass on Feb. 15, 5:30 p.m. at Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City with Fr. Diwane Cacao as the main celebrant and healer. A forum on "Caring for Gay Loved Ones" will be held on Feb. 17 at the Good Shepherd Convent in Quezon City. For more information, contact Pro-life Philippines at 9112911.

Organizing seminar slated

A SEMINAR on organizing and managing a non-government organization, cooperative, foundation, local government, school or corporate organization will be held on Feb. 7, from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. at Richville Hotel on Edsa, Mandaluyong City. For more information, call Tritium Knowledge Center Publishing at 5310084, 0919-2299777 or e-mail tritium@pldtdsl.net or tkcp_ph@yahoo.com.

OMIGOSH
An ordinary-looking laundry shop with a not-so-ordinary name in Krus na Ligas, Quezon City.
ROGER CARPIO

Did you know

THE COLLEGE of Music of the University of the Philippines was created on Feb. 4, 1916 by Legislature Act No. 2623 which was introduced by Sen. Joaquin Luna, brother of heroes Juan and Antonio. The conservatory opened as a UP unit in September of that year in a rented building in Quiapo, Manila. It moved to Ermita in 1924, then to the Diliman campus in 1948. It was housed in the administration building until the construction in 1963 of the music building which was named after an alumnus, Nicanor Abelardo.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Metro Citizen's call

0918-8985566

VERY crooked Kaingin Access Road and Moonwalk Phase 2 Avenue. This has gone on for many years. Paging Parañaque City government officials!

—CHIQUI RODRIGUEZ, Parañaque

This is my second time to text Citizen's Call about this problem. Paging Taguig City Hall! Please have our street (DMC St. Extension) repaired. Please *lang*.

—ARIS BORJA, Sta. Ana, Taguig City

Ang kahabaan ng Juan Luna at N. Zamora, Tondo, Manila ay maraming eskwelahan, kaya dinadaanan ng marami. Pero wala ng bangketa para sa mga naglalakad. Sa kanto ng Panday Pira at N. Zamora sa tapat ng eskwelahan, hindi lang bangketa pati kalsada sinakop na. Untouchable *yata ang mga nakatira dito* (The entire length of Juan Luna and N. Zamora is dotted with schools so there's a lot of people in the area. But there are no sidewalks they can use. At the corner of Panday Pira and N. Zamora in front of a school, not only the sidewalks but the entire street has been occupied. Just wondering if the residents in this area are untouchable).

—ANTONIO VILLANUEVA, Caloocan City

'Wowowee' stampede still haunts rescuer; victims seek justice

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr. and Emman Cena

THE SCENE REMAINS FRESH in his memory: The street was littered with bodies whose faces were frozen in pain.

The area emitted an unbearable stench—a mix of urine and human waste—offering some clues as to how much suffering the victims endured when they were pinned to death.

Pasig City Rescue operations commander Romme Antinero was among the first to respond to the stampede at the Philsports Arena (formerly Ultra) a year ago. A total of 71 people died in a stampede that marred the anniversary celebration of the TV game show "Wowowee."

"We were told medical response was needed in the area. We thought we would have to take care of people with only minor injuries," Antinero said.

Unprepared

He added, however, that he and his team were not prepared for what they saw.

Twenty bodies were sprawled on Capt. Henry Javier Street. Survivors looked on and some were fainting out of exhaustion and shock.

Antinero ordered his members to search the area for other casualties. They were shocked to find more bodies lined up on the slope going to the compound of the arena grounds.

"That was my first time to see a big number of casualties," the 31-year-old rescuer said.

His team had responded to a lot of emergencies. But seeing bleeding victims of vehicular accidents or even those with broken limbs had not prepared him for the shock of seeing a big number of bodies, mostly elderly women, lined up on the street.

But Antinero and his team had a job to do.

Buckling down to work

His team managed to revive two victims who no longer had pulses when they were checked but most had been dead minutes or even hours before they were pulled out of the pile of bodies.

Some of the rescuers broke down the moment they left the area, Antinero recalled. Most of them were quiet during the debriefing procedure.

Some begged off from going around hospitals and morgues to check how many were killed and injured, saying they had witnessed too much.

Nightmares

One of them had nightmares even two months after the stampede.

This is what happened, according to survivors and the police:

In an attempt to get ahead of the line and enter the arena to get assured seats, people on the street started pushing those in front of them, pinning elderly women, who were prioritized in the first few lines, against the closed LRP Gate on the Ultra grounds.

The gate leads to a 70-meter-long slope, descending at an angle of about 30 degrees, according to officials.

So when the gate gave way, the victims slid down the slope, falling one on top of the other, pinning children, mothers and grandmothers on the ground and against the railings.

Those who were farther away kept on pushing, thinking that those in the front lines were already moving, not knowing that there were people who were already being trampled upon.

Vigil for justice

On Saturday, exactly a year after the stampede occurred, hundreds of people held a vigil at the Philsports Arena to commemorate the tragedy and call for justice for those killed or injured in the Ultra tragedy.

Some of those present placed banners bearing messages calling for justice at the gates of the arena.

Rose Roque, one of the vigil leaders from the Volunteers Against Crime and Corruption (VACC) which is helping some of the victims' kin, said that a multinational company had given them some food for the two-night vigil.

Still waiting

Another vigil leader, Rizaldy Javierto, whose mother Virginia and sister Josephine were among those killed, said that he was still waiting for the pledges made by the "71 Dreams Foundation."

The foundation was formed by TV network ABS-CBN, which produces "Wowowee," to provide long-term assistance to families orphaned by the tragedy.

"We only got the P75,000 burial and interment fee. I am asking for the damages they caused on our lives," Javierto told the Inquirer.

"My mother used to receive a monthly pension of almost P60,000 as our father served in the US Army," he added.

But Javierto said they were willing to forget about filing charges against ABS-CBN as long as the network would extend support to their family.

In March 2006, the National Bureau of Investigation filed charges of reckless imprudence resulting in multiple homicide and multiple physical injuries charges against top executives of ABS-CBN in connection with the stampede.

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.
GUAGUA, PAMPANGA

February 2, 2007

INVITATION TO BID

PAMPANGA II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (PELCO II) WITH OFFICE ADDRESS AT SAN ROQUE, GUAGUA, PAMPANGA IS INVITING ELIGIBLE BIDDERS FOR THE SUPPLY, DELIVERY, INSTALLATION, TESTING AND COMMISSIONING OF THE FOLLOWING

DETAILED SPECIFICATION:

ITEM		QUANTITY
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Rated voltage	72.5 KV	
Rated normal current	2,500 Amps.	
Protection Panel	Wall mounted type, Indoor application	
Differential Relay	Micom P632 Micro-Processor	

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1 set Battery Charger
1 set Battery Bank
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Please include in your proposal the following:
a. Bid Amount (Pls. indicate if VAT inclusive or exclusive)
b. Delivery Date
c. Validity Date
d. Terms of Payment
e. Preferred unit - manufactured in U.S.A., Japan or Europe

You are therefore invited to submit your sealed bid on February 13, 2007 (Tuesday), 2:00 P.M. at PELCO II Board Room San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga. Opening of sealed bids shall be on the same date and time.

To all interested bidders please prepare and submit the following documents to the BAC Chairman for your Accreditation. (For non-accredited supplier only).
1. Company's Profile
2. Latest ITR
3. Mayor's / Business Permit
4. Audited Financial Statement
5. DTI and SEC Registration
6. Accreditation Fee (P1,000.00)

All qualified bidders should secure bidding documents from the BAC Secretary on February 8, 2007 with Bid Documents Fee to be paid at the Cashier's office in the amount of P10,000.00. The bid documents fee is based on the actual expenses incurred in the publication of this invitation and the reproduction of the bidding documents.

The Bid Bond to be included in the Financial Proposal is either in the form of the following:
a. Cash / Manager's Check (inclusive of VAT) – 2.5% of the total bid price
b. Surety Bond (inclusive of VAT) – 10% of the total bid price

All bidders are requested to be at PELCO II Board Room exactly at the given date and time. Late comers will not be entertained by the Committee.

The Approved Budget Cost for this particular bidding is TWO MILLION EIGHT HUNDRED THOUSAND PESOS (Php 2.8M). (inclusive of VAT)

The BAC has the right to reject any or all bids which failed to comply with the requirements, waive any informality in the proposal received and to accept such most advantageous to the cooperative.

For more information please see / contact Engr. Raul L. Canlas at PELCO II Office or dial number (045) 900-2650 or 0920-918-5464.

(Sgd.) ENGR. RAUL L. CANLAS
PBAC Chairperson

Noted by:
(Sgd.) MR. SULPICIO C. LAGARDE, JR.
General Manager

(PDI – February 4 & 5, 2007)

PHILIPPINE CARABAO CENTER
Department of Agriculture

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Carabao Center (PCC), an attached agency of the Department of Agriculture, is inviting all interested suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the:

Security Services of the PCC National Gene Pool and Headquarters for the Year 2007

The date of bidding and pre-bidding conference including the eligibility requirements are detailed as follows:

Date of bidding	March 6, 2007, 10:00 a.m.
Place of bidding	PCC National Gene Pool and Hqs. CLSU Cpd., Maharlika Highway, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija

A. Requirements to be submitted on the date of the bidding

Envelope 1	Eligibility Requirements
Envelope 2	Technical Documents
Envelope 3	Financial Documents
Envelope 4	Bid Proposal
Pre-bid conference	February 27, 2007, 10:00 a.m. PCC National Gene Pool and Hqs. CLSU Cpd., Maharlika Highway, Science City of Muñoz, Nueva Ecija
Issuance of Instructions to Bidders, Bid Proposal Forms bidding documents	February 12-16, 2007

B. Eligibility Requirements:

B.1 Legal Documents (Envelope 1)
- Mayor's Permit Municipal License (Current)
- DTI/SEC Registration (Current)
- BIR, TIN and VAT Registrations
- Statement that the firm is not blacklisted by any government office, agency or corporation

B.2.1 Technical Documents (Envelope 2)
- Track record of previous similar transaction including contact persons and telephone numbers
- Award or contract related to the services to be procured. The previous sales or contract shall be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the services to be bidded
- A valid PNP Security Agencies and Guards Supervision Division registration of the security agency shall also be submitted

B.2.2 Financial Documents (Envelope 3)
- Financial Statement stamped "Received" by the BIR for the immediate preceding calendar or fiscal years duly notarized. The working capital (current assets less current liabilities) of the two (2) audited Financial Statements shall be at least equal to the total amount of the approved agency estimate.

C. Bid Proposal (Envelope 4)
- Sealed bids shall be accompanied by a Bid Security equivalent to 2.5% of the total bid price in the form of cash or manager's/cashier's check from a bank or financial institution.

For further information, please call Engr. Eduardo Dalusong, Procurement Officer at telephone numbers (044) 4560-731 to 33 or Mr. Rogel M. Dela Cuesta at telephone numbers 926-7707 and 921-3863.

All particulars relative to the Eligibility, Bid Bond, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation and Award shall be governed by Republic Act No. 9184 and its implementing rules and regulations.

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(Sgd.) LIBERTADO C. CRUZ
Executive Director

(PDI - Feb. 5, 2007)

Still feeding children after 100 years

Gota de Leche's milk rations big boost to health of city's poor

By Tina G. Santos

EVERY THURSDAY, SOME 65 children from indigent families gather in front of a pink building that stands out in the heart of the busy and congested University Belt in Manila.

They are among the 250 poorly nourished children "enrolled" in the feeding program of an institution considered as the pioneering project of the country's first citizen-led nongovernment organization.

Accompanied by their mothers, the children, aged one to five years old, are examined by a pediatrician before they are given a two-week supply of powdered milk.

This has been a common sight in the establishment which many city residents, Manila oldtimers in particular, know as Gota de Leche (Drop of Milk), a name derived from its main mission: A milk feeding program for malnourished children.

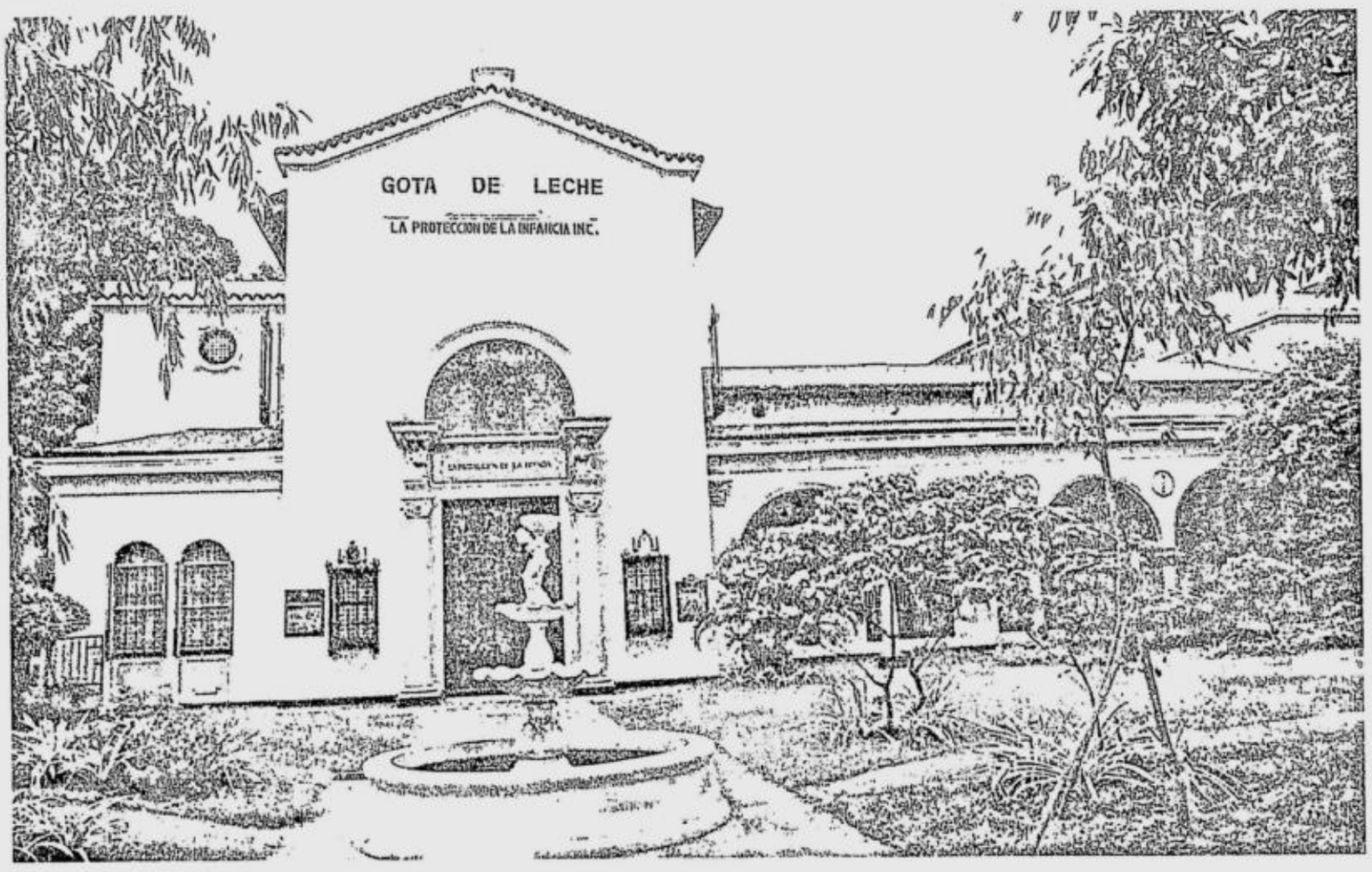
Lourdes Almeda-Lopez Sarabia, vice president and executive director of La Proteccion dela Infancia Inc.—the NGO which continues to operate the century-old Gota de Leche—said its main objective has always been to address the needs of children, particularly those suffering from malnutrition.

Gota de Leche's pediatrician, Dr. Malou Villavicencio, monitors the progress in the health of the recipients until they "graduate" with a clean bill of health, Sarabia told the INQUIRER in an interview.

"Graduates are replaced by new beneficiaries," she said, adding that the children come not only from different parts of Metro Manila but also from nearby provinces.

Milk distribution, Sarabia said, used to done on a daily basis. "But we had to consider the fact that most of our beneficiaries are poor. We want to spare them from spending too much for transportation fare every day just to get their ration, so we made it twice a month and once for those living in far areas."

Founded in 1907 by civic workers, including Trinidad Rizal, sister of national hero Dr. Jose Rizal; Dr. Fernando Calderon, the first Filipino director of the Philippine General Hospital; and Dr. Jose Fabella, after whom the country's largest government maternity facility was named, Gota de Leche looked after children who were orphaned during during the Philippine-American War.



THE GOTA de Leche (Drop of Milk) building is named after the project which aims to help children suffering from malnutrition. One hundred years later, the project is still going strong. At right, some of the beneficiaries receive their two-week supply of milk. PHOTOS BY RUDY ESPERAS

Sarabia, whose mother Judge Natividad Almeda Lopez was among the first volunteer members and later on, one of the presidents of the institution, said Gota de Leche's early years were focused on fighting infant mortality. At that time, the country's rate was considered among the highest in the world.

The early beneficiaries of Gota de Leche were nursed by volunteer wet nurses. Other sources of milk included animals such as goats, cows and carabaos, Sarabia added.

Standing on a 3,370-sq m property on S. H. Loyola Street (formerly Lepanto Street) in Sampaloc donated by the philanthropist Don Teodoro Yangco, the institution provided milk to babies not only of poor parents but also to those whose mothers were unable to breastfeed.

Sarabia disclosed that during World War II, even American babies whose parents were prisoners of war had their daily rations delivered by Gota de Leche.

Gota de Leche's work also went uninterrupted even during the Japanese occupation, she said. "The milk feedings went on despite aerial bombings that endangered the lives not only of the babies but also of the doctors and nurses that attended to them."

But the hardships of war which resulted in an increase in the number of Gota babies, on top of the difficulty of getting a steady supply of milk, later prompted the institution to look for other sources like the farms in Bulacan.

Not long after, Gota decided to switch to powdered milk when supplies from its provincial sources arrived in a curdled state, she added.

Gota's initial funding came mostly from contributions and gifts from affluent Manila families. Income from benefit operas also helped boost the organization's funds that eventually facilitated the purchase of milking cows from Australia and Calcutta to start a dairy farm, Sarabia said.

"These cows made up the Buendia dairy farm which assured Gota de Leche beneficiaries of their daily milk rations," she said. Old cows were sold to the highest bidder and income from these auctions went to the institution's coffers.

Sarabia added that the proceeds from the sale of La Proteccion's Manila Children's Hospital (later renamed Manila Children's and Lying-in Hospital) which was established in the 1940s to provide pediatric care to the milk recipients, likewise helped finance Gota de Leche's day-to-day operations.

To date, Gota de Leche survives because of donations from generous organizations and individuals, as well as rentals from parking and a canteen located behind the historic building that serves students in the U-Belt area.

Sarabia said Gota de Leche's landscaped front lawn and a small hall at the second floor are rented out as venues for wedding receptions and other events.

Apart from getting regular milk rations for their children, mothers also drop by Gota de Leche to pray to the image of Our Lady of La Leche, the patroness of mothers and pregnant women, enthroned at the foyer.

"Pregnant women pray to her for a safe delivery, while childless women asked to be blessed with a child," Sarabia said. There are times, she added, when Gota also provides baking lessons for the children's parents and guardians.

Four years ago, Gota de Leche was cited in the 2003 Unesco Asia-Pacific Heritage Awards after the building, originally designed by famous architect Arcadio Arellano, underwent major restoration.

The National Historical Institute also installed a historical marker at Gota de Leche in recognition of the structure's outstanding contribution to Philippine architecture.

Another marker honored the pioneering and historic work of La Proteccion de la Infancia Inc.

In one of his articles, architect and INQUIRER columnist Augusto Villalon, who led Gota de Leche's restoration project along with a team of professionals, said the building was patterned after one of the architectural world's icons, the Ospedale degli Innocenti, an orphanage in Florence.

But beyond bringing back the building to its original 1917 look, Sarabia takes pride in saying that Gota de Leche, after its restoration, has attracted heirs of its past administrations and early donors to renew their commitment to the institution. "They have once again become involved in our programs," she said.

Once in a while, the staff of Gota de Leche organizes activities for the children, particularly during the holidays. The affairs serve as a sort of a reunion, "especially for Gota babies who have now grown up," according to Sarabia.

And every now and then, "graduates" also drop by just to express their gratitude to her and other officials, and to revisit the institution which has become a symbol of hope in a changing neighborhood.

Urban environmentalists bat for bamboo

By Amadís Ma. Guerrero
Contributor

THE "LOWLY" BAMBOO, FOUND in abundance and often ignored, is actually a miracle product, a wonder plant. It has cooling properties. Grown on a huge scale, bamboo can cool the earth and counter global warming. (Think of Al Gore's documentary "An Inconvenient Truth.")

In an interaction with Mother Earth Philippines conveners and the media held recently at the Heritage House and Environment Training Center in Blue Ridge, Quezon City, Undersecretary Edgardo C. Manda indicated that the benefits of bamboo on the environment are manifold, along with the possibilities of generating livelihood.

Manda is also director of the Philippine Bamboo Foundation (ecmanda2002@yahoo.com) which is based in Pasay City.

The bamboo plant cleans watersheds and protects the water system, sequesters carbon and has six times more fiber (used for paper and plastic) than the fast-growing pine tree. It is earthquake-resistant, tolerates wide soils, controls erosion and greens the environment.

Manda described the bamboo as "the other tree of life," along with the coconut. In view of the world's shrinking forest, the scientific community now recognizes bamboo as a substitute for timber.

For the lay person, the many uses of bamboo can be an eye-opener. For example, did you know that there is such a thing as bamboo beer? It's said to taste like fruit juice. The various parts of bamboo can also be made into other beverages and medicine.

Bamboo nurseries and factories turn out finished products such as bags, sheaths, jewelry, floorings, curtains, mats, carpets, woven articles, chopsticks, clothing, brooms and wooden boards which can be exported to the US and Europe.

In Metro Manila, the bamboo is planted in the gardens of ecology-conscious homeowners to cool the air, cleanse the immediate surroundings and for landscaping and beautification purposes.

"My love for bamboo has to do with my being against global warming," said environmentalist Lita E. Salvador, a member of Mother Earth Philippines and Zero Waste, and resident of Valle Verde 3, Pasig City. "Bamboo cools the air, emits oxygen needed by the body, holds water just like any tree but of course they say the bamboo is like grass, the grass of life, while the tree of life is the coconut."

She added, "The bamboo will not be uprooted in the storm, like the big old trees. It sways; whenever the wind blows from the east, it sways to the west. It's really very pliant. That's why it's nice to plant bamboo around the house. They really cool the surroundings and they're beautiful to look at."

Salvador's house is a kind of mini-showcase of the bamboo. She has the yellow *buho* variety, the green *buho*, Buddha's belly and Benguet bamboo. These grow in profusion in front of the house, in the elevated garden, and serve as a tall perimeter fence which softens the surroundings.

"The bamboo grows so fast," she observed as she took a visitor around the area. "No cultivation, low maintenance. All you have to do is water it. You don't have to take care of it; just a little water and that's it. It grows in any kind of soil, but grows faster in soil that is loose, damp, loamy, sandy and not too compact (as in riverine areas and beaches)."

LITA Salvador, an environmentalist, relaxes in her bamboo garden. At right, she holds up a bag made out of bamboo. PHOTOS BY ROGER CARPIO

The Benguet bamboo grows up to seven feet and is "very fine" in appearance: "My gardener just cuts it so it will not grow wild," she said.

The Buddha's belly variety is so called because the stalks are "mataba" (fat), just like an extended tummy. And the *buho* varieties may grow up to 15 feet. The leaves are longer than those of the Benguet bamboo.

Near the doorway is an exquisite set of bamboo chimes topped off by a coconut shell, and purchased for the equivalent of P750 in Indonesia. It emits a very pleasing, melodic sound, softer than the American-made metallic chimes that hang right beside it.

"If you have a really big garden, you can plant all the varieties of bamboo," Salvador said. "My garden is small, so I just put in the cutesy, cutesy ones ..."

There are bamboo poles that are giant in size, stretching several stories high, and these are used for scaffolding in constructing edifices here and abroad. A rare variety is the black bamboo which is expensive, as in one plant for P3,000.

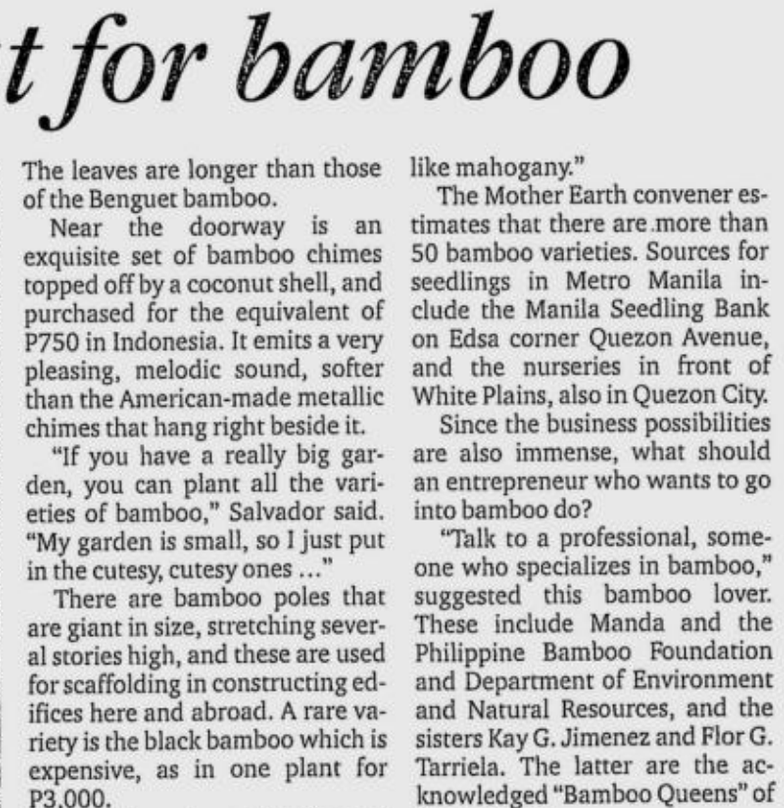
"This is a nice variety," noted Salvador. "It's not as tall as the giant bamboo and it's used for decoration and for bags and trays. The color is nice, black, like mahogany."

The Mother Earth convener estimates that there are more than 50 bamboo varieties. Sources for seedlings in Metro Manila include the Manila Seedling Bank on Edsa corner Quezon Avenue, and the nurseries in front of White Plains, also in Quezon City.

Since the business possibilities are also immense, what should an entrepreneur who wants to go into bamboo do?

"Talk to a professional, someone who specializes in bamboo," suggested this bamboo lover. These include Manda and the Philippine Bamboo Foundation and Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and the sisters Kay G. Jimenez and Flor G. Tarriela. The latter are the acknowledged "Bamboo Queens" of Metro Manila.

You will not find the bamboo plant in the West. "Bamboo is really for Asians. God created it that way," declared Salvador.



Warming may cause Maldives to disappear

COLOMBO—THIS INDIAN OCEAN island cluster is a magnet for Hollywood stars such as Tom Cruise, but the Maldives may disappear within generations unless world leaders urgently combat climate change, President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom warns.

With a United Nations climate panel forecasting world sea levels likely to rise by up to 59 cm (23.2 inches) by 2100 due to global warming, the risks to the low-lying island chain dotted across 800 km off the toe of India are glaring.

"The average height of the Maldives is 1.5 meters above mean sea level. Therefore, if the rate of sea level rise per century is 59 cm, it would take a couple of centuries at the most to totally inundate the entire Maldives," an alarmed Gayoom said.

"That of course will happen only if there is no concrete action to address the issue at a global stage," he added. "It is further evidence that our country is in peril, and that timely action is needed to ensure our future survival."

Renowned for its luxury resorts—accommodation in pavilions on stilts over turquoise lagoons can run to over $1,000 a night—white sand beaches and world class snorkelling and scuba, tourism is the lynchpin of the Maldives' $800-million economy.

"Our tourism industry will be affected for certain. The stretches of white sandy beaches are one of the main assets of our tourism industry," Gayoom said.

"Climate change will lead to an increase in stormy weather and coral damage too. These are major concerns for the Maldives, which has a narrow-based economy."

Of the palm-fringed archipelago's 1,192 islands and coral reef atolls, 194 are inhabited—and the beaches on 60 percent of those are already facing varying degrees of erosion, he added.

The experience of the nation's 300,000-strong Sunni Muslim population during the December 2004 tsunami serves as a cautionary tale.

While geography helped save the Maldives from the kind of scenes of death and destruction seen in hard-hit countries such as neighboring Sri Lanka, authorities were forced to evacuate 13 islands completely and relocate their residents elsewhere.

The Maldives islands are effectively the peaks of underwater mountains—many are only a few hundred meters across at most—so, without a large land mass to crest on, the tsunami waves just washed over them at a height of around one meter rather than the towering waves seen in other countries.

"The main threats to our island nation's survival—global warming and sea-level rise—emanate from beyond our geographical borders," Gayoom said, adding that the chain was investing in coastal protection infrastructure.

"We do not wish to become environmental refugees, and we will not leave the Maldives unless we are forced to."

Gayoom takes no comfort from the fact that the UN climate panel's forecast of sea level increase has narrowed from a bracket of 9-88 cm by the year 2100 to 18-59 cm, a reduction some experts see as encouraging.

"It indicates, on the contrary, that sea level rise is a clear and present danger," he said. "These figures clearly demonstrate the need to act urgently, as sea levels are expected to continue rising for many decades and centuries." *Reuters*

Thailand OKs copycat version of topselling heart drug

BANGKOK—THAILAND, WHICH PROVIDES free medical care for the poor, is clashing with the powerful pharmaceutical industry by becoming the first country to approve a copycat version of a blockbuster heart disease drug.

In a move activists hope will set a precedent for developing countries, the army-backed government has decided to allow imports of cheaper generic forms of Plavix, the world's second topselling medicine, and AIDS drug Kaletra.

Last month's decision has drawn outrage from drug companies who say it damages Thailand's image in the global business community. But the government argues it is acting in line with World Trade Organization rules.

"Heart disease is one of leading causes of death among Thai people. We are dealing with the lives of many people," said Sanguan Nitatayarumphong, secretary-general of the health security office at the public health ministry.

"We are just helping our patients, and our decision is consistent with WTO rules," Sanguan said.

A WTO deal in 2001 allows nations affected by diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis a temporary exemption from international laws protecting intellectual property rights.

Plavix, a blood-thinning treatment to prevent heart attacks, costs 120 baht ($3.50) per pill. Sanguan said only 20 percent of heart disease patients here have access to the life-saving medicine.

The generic version approved in January will cost only six to 12 baht per pill, he said.

"We are human beings. Human beings want to survive. If the drug is cheap, people can easily access it and there should be no problems," he said.

Plavix, sold by French-based Sanofi-Aventis and its US partner, Bristol Myers-Squibb, raked in global sales of $5.9 billion in 2005. *AFP*

MOROCCAN FESTIVAL
An entertainer performs during the Baba Aichour parade in Casablanca, Feb. 3. In local tradition, Baba Aichour (the "Moroccan Father Christmas") is an old, wise man who knocks on doors and asks for gifts which he then gives to needy children. REUTERS

Iran allows rare peek at sensitive nuke site

ISFAHAN, IRAN—NOTHING seems extraordinary on the quiet provincial road outside the ancient Iranian city of Isfahan. Then suddenly, nestling beneath the mountains, a tall chimney emerges flanked by an impressive complex of buildings.

This is the Iranian plant for converting uranium, a centerpiece of the Islamic republic's nuclear program, and rarely opened up to outsiders.

Here Iran converts uranium into the gas that can then be fed into centrifuges to make enriched uranium, a substance that can be used to make both nuclear fuel and in an atomic bomb.

Driving along, there is little indication of the strategic importance of the verdant 60 hectare complex except a raft of yellow "No Photo" signs and occasional anti-aircraft artillery guns.

But then the mass of security officials waiting at the entrance betrays the importance of the site, just 15 kilometers (9 miles) outside Isfahan, Persia's former imperial capital and a jewel in Iran's tourist crown.

Visits by journalists are almost unknown at the highly protected site but on Saturday dozens were bussed in from Tehran as Iran seeks to prove to the outside world that its controversial nuclear program is transparent.

"This is the maximum transparency you can imagine that a country can have," said Iran's ambassador to the UN nuclear watchdog Ali Asghar Soltanieh before taking journalists and visiting envoys on a tour of the site.

"It shows that the government of the Islamic Republic of Iran pays due attention to the public opinion of the international community," he added.

Before being allowed into the heart of the conversion plant, journalists were told not to "overstep the boundaries" and observe a formal ban on taking pictures of the site's exterior.

Then the assembled foreign and domestic media were given white protective clothes and headgear, as distinct from the blue clothing handed to the visiting International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) envoys.

Hit by UN Security Council sanctions over its atomic program and vehemently denying US allegations it is seeking a nuclear weapon, Iran is keen to prove its activities are clear and transparent.

Its decision to open the doors of the Isfahan plant also comes amid mounting Western pressure for Tehran to halt uranium enrichment activities or face further consequences.

How much can be interpreted from such a visit by nuclear non-specialists is debatable however, and Cuban ambassador to the IAEA Norma Estenoz said afterwards that it was for other specialists to make conclusions.

The site is marked by gleamingly clean white corridors leading to halls filled with complex aerial piping and tanks marked with chemical names like "T2-AP Aluminum Carbide, 20 percent." At the Isfahan site, uranium yellowcake made from raw mined uranium is turned into UF6 gas, from which enriched uranium is produced. *AFP*

Half a billion Asians crammed into urban slums, Habitat says

SINGAPORE—ASIAN COUNtries must strive to provide decent housing for more than half a billion urban slum dwellers left behind by the region's robust but uneven economic growth, an international aid group said.

With 1.15 billion more people expected to move from rural areas to cities in the next 30 years, the situation is set to worsen if not addressed early, US-based Habitat for Humanity said in a report released at the weekend.

This will have a severe economic, social and political impact, as most of the migrants are poor people seeking a better life in the city.

"The Asia Pacific region is in the midst of a dramatic rural-urban transition that is shaping the demand for low-income housing," the report said.

"Whether and how this demand will be met over the next 30 years will have (a) profound bearing on the further economic, social and political direction of the region."

Asia, led by China's sizzling 10.7 gross domestic product expansion last year, has been a favorite region for foreign investment because of strong economic growth.

However, the region is home to 60 percent of the world's slum areas where an estimated 554 million people live—roughly equivalent to the combined population of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations bloc.

Most of these slum dwellers live in houses made of temporary materials, have little or no access to safe water, sanitation or other basic amenities, Habitat said.

Slums are overcrowded and often located next to garbage dumps, railroad tracks and flood-prone areas. There is little access to health care and education and residents are vulnerable to disease.

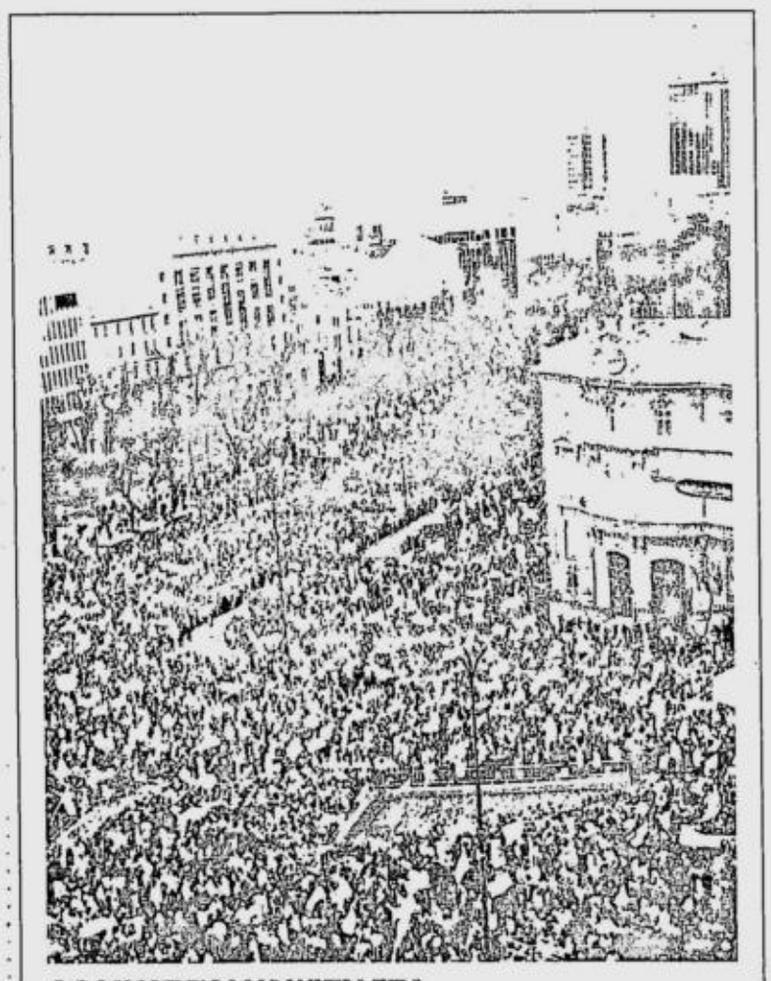
"As China, India and the rest of the Asian tigers rush to the front of the global economic development race, we can scarcely afford to leave so many families behind, languishing in poverty," said Habitat's Asia Pacific vice president Steve Weir.

Habitat for Humanity is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing group dedicated to bringing decent housing to the world's poor.

It has built more than 200,000 houses worldwide and its most famous volunteer is former US president Jimmy Carter.

The report noted that "one of the most disturbing trends present throughout the region is the rise of wealth and income inequality." A stark illustration of this disparity could be seen in the resurgent Singapore property market, where luxury condominium units costing more than a million dollars are snapped up within hours by foreign and local buyers.

On the other hand, millions of urban dwellers in cities such as Manila and Jakarta live in makeshift cardboard or plywood homes—or under bridges. *AFP*



AGAINST TALKS WITH ETA
Tens of thousands of people rally Feb.3 in Madrid to protest against negotiations with the violent Basque separatist group ETA, with many lambasting the government for supporting the idea of peace talks. AP

Rebel prophetess who shook Uganda is buried

BUNGATIRA, UGANDA—A Ugandan prophetess, who led a doomed rebel uprising of hymn-singing followers who believed themselves invulnerable to government bullets, was buried on Saturday.

Alice Lakwena, a former fishmonger who claimed inspiration from a Holy Spirit, led a major revolt against the government 20 years ago and though her fanatical followers were routed her movement gave rise to Joseph Kony's rebel Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

She died aged 50 last month at a refugee camp in Kenya where she had lived in exile after the Ugandan army crushed her year-long rebellion in 1987.

Blending the beliefs of her northern Acholi tribe and Christian symbolism, Lakwena persuaded followers they would be immune to bullets and that stones would explode like grenades.

She led an army of 10,000 from her native northern Uganda to within a few day's march of Kampala before her forces were routed and she fled on a bicycle.

But her uprising reflected growing opposition among her Acholi tribe to President Yoweri Museveni and her movement gave rise to Kony's LRA.

The LRA's two-decade rebellion in northern Uganda, one of Africa's longest running conflicts, has killed tens of thousands of people and forced nearly two million into squalid camps.

Talks since July between the LRA and Kampala have produced a truce that has been largely respected, but no peace deal.

An old woman knelt wailing by Lakwena's open casket in her mother's ramshackle cottage before the lid was closed as she was lowered into her grave after prayers and hymns.

Relatives among the scores of people who gathered for the funeral in the northern village of Bungatira, were anxious to remember her work as a traditional healer before she mobilized a revolt in which thousands died.

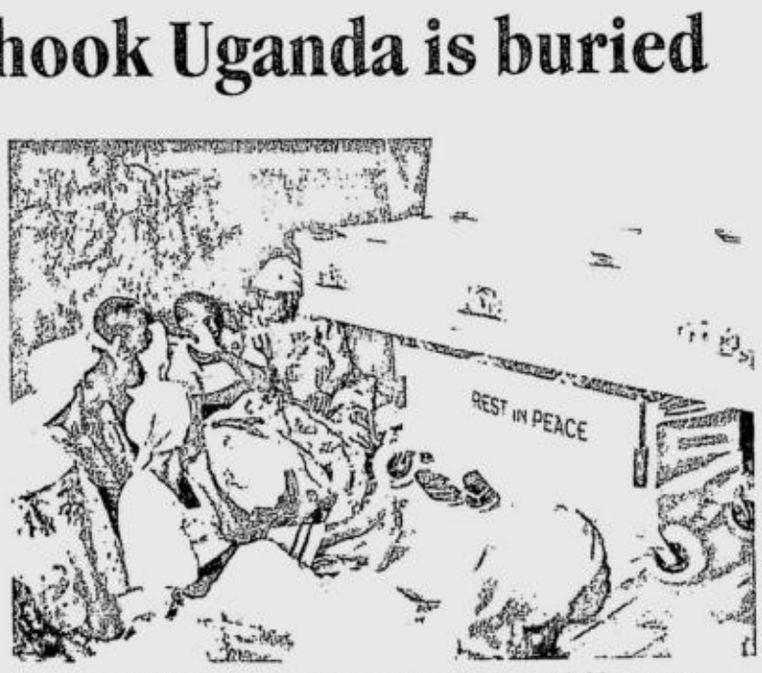
"She cast out demons," said her sister Betty Lanyero, 52.

"People liked the way she was healing, it was even free of charge." Seeking to regain power after Museveni toppled a junta of Acholi generals in early 1986, Kony and Lakwena were among a crop of Acholi rebel leaders who emerged to fight his soldiers.

While Kony's rebels later earned notoriety for abducting thousands of children and mutilating villagers, Lakwena's year-long uprising enjoyed far more popular support than Kony managed in two decades.

Lakwena's chanting followers were often mown down in their hundreds while yelling their war cry of "James Bond." Born Alice Auma, she adopted the name Lakwena—messenger—after she reported being possessed by the spirit of an Italian soldier during a mythical 40-day immersion in the Nile, enhancing her spiritual appeal.

While the two are often said to be cousins, Lakwena denied links to Kony during her exile in Kenya, where she still preached, knit and told followers she could treat AIDS until her death. *AP*



Relatives mourn around the open coffin of Holy Spirit Movement leader Alice Lakwena, a Ugandan prophetess who 20 years ago led a major revolt against the government REUTERS

UK battles lethal bird flu outbreak

HOLTON, ENGLAND—BRITAIN scrambled to contain its first outbreak of the highly pathogenic H5N1 strain of bird flu in domestic poultry on Saturday after the virus was found at a farm run by Europe's biggest turkey producer.

Some 2,500 turkeys have died since Thursday at the Bernard Matthews farm near Lowestoft in eastern England. The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) said all 159,000 birds there would be culled over the next few days.

"We're in new territory," National Farmers' Union Poultry Board chair Charles Bourns told Reuters. "We've every confidence in Defra but, until we know how this disease arrived, this is a very apprehensive time for all poultry farmers." Defra said the virus was the same pathogenic Asian strain found last month in Hungary where an outbreak among geese on a farm prompted the slaughter of thousands of birds.

That outbreak followed a relative lull in cases of H5N1 among European poultry since hundreds of turkeys died at a farm in east France about a year ago.

The strain tends to be transmitted to poultry by infected migrating wildfowl.

It has killed at least 165 people worldwide since 2003, most of them in Asia, and more than 200 million birds have died from it, or been killed to prevent its spread.

But it has not yet fulfilled scientists' worst fears by mutating into a form that could be easily transmitted between humans and possibly cause a global pandemic.

Avian flu expert Colin Butter of the Institute of Animal Health said the British outbreak was surprising as it had happened outside the main bird migration period.

"The next thing we need to know is if this is a primary or secondary case. If this is a secondary case, it is much more serious. If this is the first case, or 'reference case,' and we can stamp it out, the outbreak will be controlled," he said.

A protection zone was established with a radius of 3 km (2 miles) and a surveillance zone of 10 km around the infected farm. Bird gatherings such as bird shows and pigeon racing were suspended nationwide.

Across the North Sea in the Netherlands, Europe's second biggest poultry producer after France, the agriculture ministry reacted by ordering farmers to keep poultry indoors to prevent them from any contact with wild birds.

Norway, which has had no cases of the deadly bird flu strain, told farmers to keep poultry indoors in the area south of Nordland county and banned bird gatherings, such as bird shows and competitions.

Britain's poultry industry is worth 3.4 billion pounds ($6.7 billion) and produces 800 million birds each year.

The Health Protection Agency said the current level of risk to humans from H5N1 was extremely low.

In May, 50,000 chickens at three farms in Norfolk, also in eastern England and home to some of Europe's biggest poultry farms, were culled after another strain, H7N3, was detected.

A wild swan found dead in Scotland in March had the H5N1 version of the virus. It was thought to have caught the disease elsewhere, died at sea and been washed ashore in Scotland. *Reuters*

BLAIR: Golden boy no longer. REUTER

Nigeria bird flu death confirmed, says WHO

GENEVA—LABORATORY TESTS have confirmed that a 22-year-old woman in Africa's most populous nation, Nigeria, died from the virulent H5N1 strain of bird flu last month, the World Health Organization said Saturday.

"The initial positive test findings from a laboratory in Nigeria were confirmed by the WHO Collaborating Center for Reference and Research on influenza in London," the WHO said in a statement on its website.

The WHO said samples from all contacts of the woman, who died in the Nigerian city of Lagos on Jan. 17, had tested negative and did not show any sign of transmission of bird flu among humans.

"Further investigations are under way to identify the source of the infection," the statement said.

Sporadic cases of human infection with avian influenza are "not unexpected" in countries like Nigeria, where H5N1 outbreaks have been prevalent in poultry for about a year, according to the UN health agency.

Nigeria's government also made an announcement confirming the fresh results and warning that the virus is widespread in Nigerian poultry.

WHO spokesperson Gregory Hartl said there was no immediate sign that the death was more than an isolated human case, although concern about the situation in the heavily populated nation and its dense urban areas was heightened.

"Given the extent of poultry infection in Nigeria ... it was just a matter of time before we had a human infection. It's not a surprise," Hartl told AFP.

The WHO said it was working with Nigerian authorities to ensure intensive surveillance.

More reports of suspected cases in Nigeria are expected as people with flu-like symptoms seek medical advice.

Scientists fear that the potentially lethal H5N1 strain of bird flu may mutate into a form that becomes more easily transmissible from person to person, triggering a global pandemic that could kill millions.

"The virus in question is quite similar to what we've seen in the past, there was no sign of substantive mutation," Hartl said after the test results from the British reference laboratory were announced.

The Nigerian woman died after helping pluck and disembowel a chicken her family bought.

Her mother died on Jan. 4 with similar symptoms but no samples were taken for testing, according to the WHO.

Observers have warned that it would be a struggle for Nigeria to contain any major outbreak of bird flu in humans.

The WHO reiterated Saturday that human cases of H5N1 are frequently linked to the slaughter of infected birds at home, and the handling of the carcasses and meat before they are cooked.

"These practices represent the highest risk to human infection and are the most important to avoid," it warned.

The Nigerian government said late Saturday: "The federal government wishes to inform the general public that the result of the test of human case of avian influenza in Nigeria, conducted by Nigerian scientists using the upgraded laboratory facilities in Nigeria, has been validated by the World Health Organization (WHO)." "H5N1 is widespread and continuing in the poultry population in Nigeria," the government's statement added.

"Currently, outbreaks in poultry have been reported in 49 local government areas, spread across 19 states and the federal Capital Territory." *AFP*

Majority of voters want Blair to resign now

LONDON—A BRITISH NEWSPAper poll suggested Sunday that a majority of voters want Prime Minister Tony Blair to resign immediately, as one of his Labor Party colleagues said his time in politics had come to an end.

An ICM poll for the right-of-center Sunday Express newspaper found that 56 percent thought Blair should quit now while 37 percent back him to stay on.

Support for him to resign straightaway also appeared to be increasing among supporters of his governing center-left party, with 43 percent saying it is time for him to go—and go now.

Blair is currently toughing out a political storm, in particular over the "cash for honors" probe about whether parties illegally offered seats in Britain's unelected upper chamber of parliament for financial donations.

The Scotland Yard inquiry has seen Blair quizzed twice as a witness and two of his closest senior aides arrested on suspicion of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

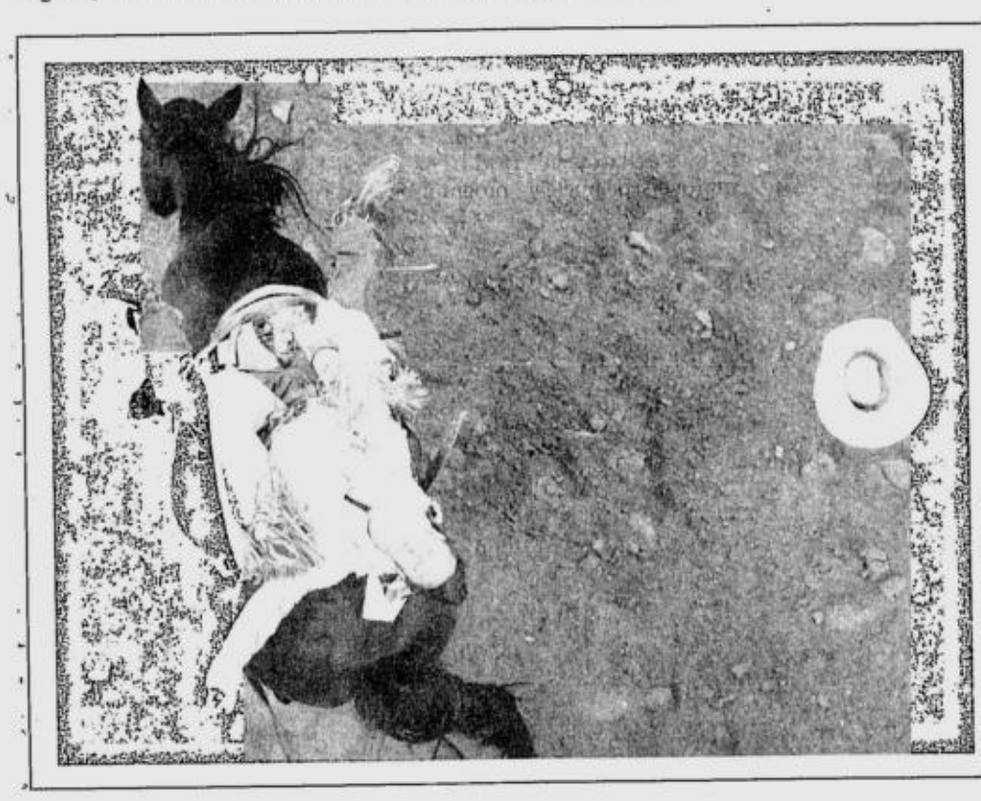
Amid claims that police are looking at an alleged cover-up of potentially incriminating e-mails, the Sunday Express poll tops off a torrid week for Blair and suggests his authority and standing are disappearing fast.

Some 66 percent of the 1,014 respondents to the poll believe evidence relating to the police probe had been covered up.

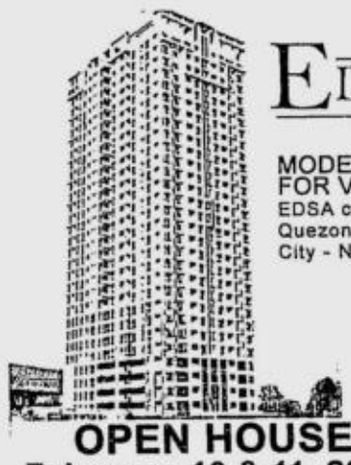
The leader of the main opposition Conservative Party, David Cameron, has openly called for Blair to quit, accusing his administration of being "dysfunctional" and "paralyzed" by the affair and other recent controversies.

Blair on Saturday tried to rally the Labor Party faithful, admitting there had been a "great storm raging" in recent days, but adding: "The storm's fury can seem fierce but the ship is on course." He appealed for calm heads in the eye of the storm "but however buffeted, it should not change our course or our confidence." A BBC television interview to be broadcast later Sunday with one of Blair's Labor Party colleagues is unlikely to smooth over troubled waters.

Left-winger John Cruddas gave the strongest criticism yet of Blair's current predicament, amid open concern within Labor that the "cash for honors" probe is damaging the party and eroding confidence in the political process. *AFP*



COWBOYS HAVE ALL THE FUN
Chris Harris, from Itasca, Texas, competes in the bareback riding event Feb. 3, at the 58th annual San Antonio Stock Show & Rodeo in San Antonio, Texas. AP



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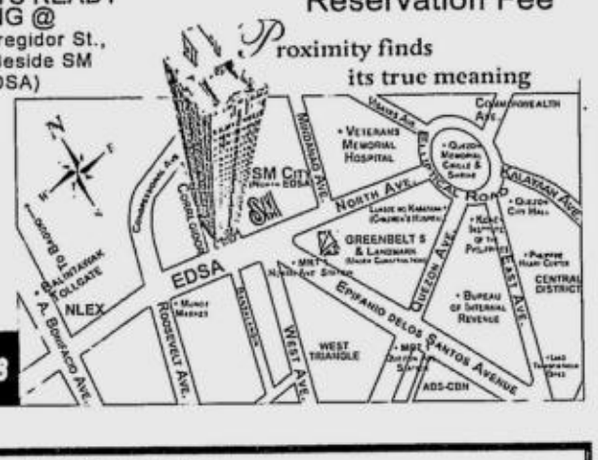

Americans on spending binge, drop savings rate to Depression era-low

By Virginie Montet

WASHINGTON—AMERICANS SPENT more than they earned last year as the economy steamed ahead, pushing the personal savings rate to negative 1.0 percent, the deepest hole since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

The figure, published last week by the US Commerce Department, means that not only did Americans spend all their income, they dug into savings and used credit to buy more.

Over the past seven decades, the personal savings rate—the difference between post-tax, or disposable, income and spending—has been in negative territory only four times: 1932, 1933, 2005 and 2006.

In the 1930s, the Great Depression explains why Americans had to dip into their savings at a time when a fourth of the workforce was out of a job.

But in 2006 and in 2005, when the personal savings rate slipped to negative 0.4 percent, the economic situation was far different, which bothers economists.

"It's surprising, especially in a period with the economy growing so strongly," said Martha Starr, an economics professor specialized in savings and consumption issues at American University in Washington.

The US economy grew by a robust 3.4 percent in 2006—consumer spending accounts for about two-thirds of US economic output—and the unemployment rate ended the year at 4.6 percent.

"That, I think, is what may be really shocking. We would think that with the unemployment rate so low and the economy growing so vigorously that there wouldn't necessarily be any reason for the saving rate to be so low," Starr said.

This spending spree is broadly explained, she said, by the sharp rise in housing prices in recent years which has left many Americans feeling rich.

"With the housing market as strong as it's been ... people would feel wealthier and would feel less need to save out of their income," she explained.

Reinforcing the urge to splurge was the ease of borrowing, whether it is financed on home equity or simply rung up on credit cards.

"Even though the Fed (Federal Reserve) has been raising interest rates considerably, the cost of credit at the retail level is still not particularly high," Starr said.

For some experts, the personal savings shortfall portends a social security crisis as the first wave of baby boomers nears retirement.

The Commerce Department's report "is a wake-up call to start changing personal savings behavior," said Marc Lackritz, co-chief executive of the Securities Industry and Financial Markets Association.

Lackritz pointed out that half of the 77 million baby boomers, Americans born between 1946 and 1964, will not have the means to support their current standard of living when they reach retirement due to a lack of savings.

The American dream could fade under the glare of overspending, MetLife, an insurance and financial services group, said.

"The announcement by the Commerce Department about the negative US savings rate, which is at its lowest level in 70 years, is a bellwether for the future of the American dream," it said.

"The lack of savings, combined with the seismic shifts that have occurred in our society in the last few decades with regard to pensions, social security and health care, are increasingly putting the dream out of reach for most Americans." MetLife said a new study it had commissioned revealed that 60 percent of working Americans said they carried more financial burdens than their parents did.

Countering the alarm bells, American University's Starr pointed out the savings rate does not take into account household assets, such as home ownership, or pre-tax contributions to retirement savings accounts, known as 401(k).

"One would expect the increased home equity and the pre-tax saving into 401(k)'s to relax the need to save. But why it would cause it to turn negative is more of a puzzle," American University's Starr said. "It's really a question of magnitude." *AFP*

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office - XI
R.C. Reyes Bldg. Quimpo Blvd., Davao City
Tel. Nos. 298-3000 to 3004 • Telefax: (082) 296-2265
www.philhealth.gov.ph

Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, **PhilHealth Regional Office XI - Davao** (PRO XI-Davao) wishes to invite bidders for the Hiring of **SECURITY SERVICES:**

15 Security Guards to be assigned in PhilHealth Regional Office XI-Davao City

12 Security Guards to be assigned in the PhilHealth Services Offices (3 SG for each PhilHealth Service Office) Digos City, Davao del Sur; Tagum City, Davao del Norte; Nabunturan, Compostela Valley Province and Mati, Davao Oriental.

The Government of the Philippines through PhilHealth had provided funds for which this invitation is issued. The Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to be bid is **Php 3,697,391.90.**

All interested parties are invited for the **Pre-Bid Conference** at the PhilHealth Regional Office XI-Davao Conference Room on **February 11, 2007 at 10:00 A.M.**

The bid documents shall be available at the General Services Section, Administration DIvision through Mr. Patrick Angelo L. Uy, Chairperson, PRO XI BAC Secretariat, starting **February 7, 2007 to March 5, 2007, from 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM,** upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Php 7,395.00.**

The bidders shall drop their duly accomplished bid documents (1) eligibility requirements, (2) technical proposal, and (3) financial proposal in three separate sealed envelopes in the bid boxes located at the **Administration Division, PhilHealth Regional Office XI - Davao, Reyes Bldg., Quimpo Boulevard, Matina, Davao City.** Deadline for submission and receipt of bids shall be on **March 9, 2007 at 11:00 A.M.** The official time clock shall be the bundy clock located at the ground floor. Any bid submitted after the cut-off time will not be accepted. **Opening of bids will follow at 1:00 P.M.** at the same venue. Any bidder who comes late will not be entertained.

The BAC shall determine if each prospective bidder is eligible to participate in the bidding by examining the completeness of each prospective bidder's eligibility requirements or statements against a checklist of requirements, using the **non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria.**

The Bid Security shall be in an amount at least equal to, and not lower than a percentage of the approved budget for the contract in the following forms:

Forms of Security	Minimum Amount in % of Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid	Amount of Bid Security
Cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit	One percent (1%)	Php 36,973.92
Bank Guarantee	One & a half percent (1½%)	Php 55,460.88

For more information, please call the BAC Secretariat at telephone nos. (082) 296-2265 (082) 299-2075 and (082) 299-3731.

We look forward to your participation in this worthwhile endeavor.

PhilHealth reserves the right to waive any formality in the responses to the eligibility requirements and to this invitation. PhilHealth further reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or declare a failure of bidding, or not award the contract, and makes no assurance that a contract shall be entered as a result of this invitation.

(Sgd.) **RAUL M. ODUCAYEN**
Chairperson, PRO XI-Davao, BAC

(PDI – Feb. 5 & 12, 2007)

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

135 die in deadliest single bombing in Iraq

BAGHDAD—A SUICIDE bomber killed 135 people on Saturday in the deadliest single bombing in Iraq since the 2003 war, driving a truck laden with one tonne of explosives into a market in a mainly Shiite area of Baghdad.

The blast, which Shiite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki blamed on Saddam Hussein supporters and other Sunni militants, shattered fruit and vegetable stalls, caved in shopfronts and left the smashed bodies of shoppers strewn in the street.

It came as US and Iraqi troops prepared for a planned offensive seen as a last-ditch effort to stem worsening sectarian bloodshed that kills hundreds in Baghdad every week.

"It was a terrible scene. Many shops and houses were destroyed," said one resident, Jassem, 42, who rushed from his home to help pull people from the rubble after hearing the explosion that rocked central Baghdad.

Maliki vowed in January to launch a crackdown in the capital to crush insurgents who have defied attempts by his government to get control of security, but it has not yet begun.

US President George W. Bush has said he is sending 21,500 reinforcements to Iraq, most earmarked for the Baghdad offensive, despite vocal opposition at home, especially among Democrats who now control both houses of Congress.

Speaking to House of Representatives Democrats on Saturday, Bush assured them that his commitment to Maliki's government was not "open-ended" and it would have to meet certain benchmarks.

A US intelligence report said on Friday that escalating violence between minority Sunni Arabs and politically dominant majority Shiites met the definition of civil war.

A senior Interior Ministry official, Major General Jihad al-Jaberi, told state television that the suicide bomber had driven a truck with one tonne of explosives.

"All Iraqis were shaken today by this crime," Maliki said in a statement in which he again spoke of his government's determination to crush the militants. "The Saddamists and Takfirists (Sunni militants) have committed another crime." Police said 305 people were wounded. The casualties swamped the capital's hospitals. There were chaotic scenes at Ibn al-Nafis hospital in central Baghdad, where hallways overflowed with wounded on trolleys.

"I was in my shop and there was a great explosion and the roof fell in on me. I woke up here in hospital," said one man at the hospital with blood streaming down his face.

Emergency workers dragged bodies from the debris and piled them on pickup trucks, a Reuters reporter at the scene said.

In Washington, the White House called the suicide bombing an "atrocity" and pledged to help the Iraqi government bring security to Baghdad.

Three car bombs in the same market in December killed 51.

Saturday's blast came hours after Iraq's leading Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani, renewed an appeal to Iraqis to avoid violence.

"Everybody knows the necessity for us to stand together and reject the sectarian tension to avoid stirring sectarian differences," his new *fatwa*, or religious edict, said.

In the worst previous single bombing in Iraq, a suicide car bomber killed 125 people in Hilla south of Baghdad in February 2005. In November 2006 six car bombs in different parts of the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad killed 202 and wounded 250.

The latest bombing will again throw the spotlight on Maliki's planned security sweep in the capital and whether it will succeed where other similar crackdowns have failed.

His critics say an offensive last summer failed because the Iraqi army committed too few troops and because he was reluctant to confront the Mehdi Army militia of cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, a key political ally.

The Pentagon has said the Mehdi Army now poses a greater threat to peace in Iraq than Sunni Islamist al-Qaida.

A militant group linked to al-Qaida—the Islamic State in Iraq—vowed in a web recording on Saturday to widen its attacks to all parts of Iraq instead of just focusing on Baghdad and would only stop when "Bush signs a surrender accord." Bush said Maliki's government must take the lead in securing the capital and make political progress in agreeing a new oil law that sets out how revenues should be shared and amending the constitution, a demand of minority Sunnis.

In the northern, ethnically mixed city of Kirkuk, seven car bombs, including a suicide attack, killed at least four people and wounded 37. Two of the cars detonated outside the offices of the main Kurdish parties in the city. The Islamic State in Iraq claimed responsibility for the attacks in an Internet statement.

Further north, another curfew was imposed in Mosul, Iraq's third largest city, after clashes between insurgents and police erupted in several neighborhoods. *Reuters*

ABU ABDULLAH, a shop owner who lost two of his sons in Saturday's bomb explosion, weeps as stands in front of his destroyed shop in the obliterated Sadriyah outdoor market in a predominantly Shiite area of Baghdad, Iraq, Feb. 4. AP

Horrific bomb attacks in Iraq

A LIST OF SOME OF THE DEADLIEST BOMB attacks in Iraq since the overthrow of Saddam Hussein in 2003:

- Aug. 19, 2003—A truck bomb wrecks UN headquarters in Baghdad, killing 22 people, including UN envoy Sergio Vieira de Mello.
- Aug. 29, 2003—A car bomb kills at least 83 people, including top Shiite Muslim leader Ayatollah Mohammed Baqer al-Hakim, at the Imam Ali mosque in Najaf.
- Feb. 1, 2004—117 people are killed when two suicide bombers blow themselves up in Arbil at the offices of the two main Kurdish factions in northern Iraq.
- Feb. 10, 2004—Suicide car bomb rips through a police station in Iskandariya, south of Baghdad, killing 53.
- Feb. 11, 2004—Suicide car bomb explodes at an Iraqi army recruitment center in Baghdad, killing 47.
- March 2, 2004—171 people are killed in twin attacks in Baghdad and Kerbala.
- Dec. 19, 2004—A suicide car bomb blast in Najaf, 300 meters from the Imam Ali shrine, kills 52 and wounds 140.
- Feb. 28, 2005—A suicide car bomb attack in Hilla, south of Baghdad, kills 125 people and wounds 130. It was postwar Iraq's worst single blast.
- July 16, 2005—A suicide bomber in a fuel truck near a Shiite mosque in the town of Mussayib, near Kerbala, kills 98.
- Sept. 14, 2005—A suicide bomber kills 114 people and wounds 156 in a Shiite district of Baghdad.
- Sept. 29, 2005—98 people are killed in three coordinated car bomb attacks in the mixed Shiite and Sunni town of Balad.
- Nov. 18, 2005—At least 74 people are killed and 150 wounded when suicide bombers blow themselves up inside two Shiite mosques in Khanaqin.
- Jan. 5, 2006—Two suicide bombers kill over 120 people and wound more than 200 in the cities of Kerbala and Ramadi.

Fifty-three were killed and 148 wounded in Kerbala and 70 killed and 65 wounded in Ramadi.

- July 1, 2006—A car bomb attack at a crowded market in Sadr city, a Shiite district of eastern Baghdad, kills 62 and wounds 114. The Supporters of the Sunni People, a previously unknown Iraqi Sunni Muslim group claim responsibility.
- July 18, 2006—Fifty-nine people are killed by a suicide bomb in Kufa, near Najaf, in an attack claimed by al-Qaida.
- Aug. 10, 2006—Thirty-five people are killed and 90 injured by bomb blasts near the Imam Ali shrine in southern city of Najaf.
- Nov. 23, 2006—Six car bombs in different parts of the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad kill 202 people and wound 250.
- Dec. 12, 2006—A suicide bomber kills 70 people and wounds at least 236 in Tayran Square in central Baghdad after luring a crowd of laborers to his vehicle with promises of work.
- Jan. 16, 2007—A car bomb and suicide bomber strike the Mustansiriya University in central Baghdad killing at least 70 people and wounding 180.

Reuters

Office of the President of the Philippines
PRESIDENTIAL MANAGEMENT STAFF
Malacañang

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Office of the President – Presidential Management Staff (OP), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), hereby invites all interested Janitorial Service providers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the procurement of janitorial services for the the PMS.

Name of Project	Procurement of PMS Janitorial Services
Location	PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
Brief Description	To provide housekeeping/janitorial services of the 12-storey PMS Building, including the building's Penthouse and roof-deck
Approved Budget For the Coontract	Two Million Four Hundred Forty-Five Thousand Pesos (Php 2,445,000.00)
Contract Duration	One (1) year
Delivery Period	01 April 2007

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding, and have key personnel and equipment (owned, lease or under purchase) available for the prosecution thereof. The list of minimum requirements is indicated in the Instruction to Bidders. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shal use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule • Time • Venue
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	05-14 February 2007, 12 Flr. PMS-BAC Secretariat
2. Pre-bid Conference	14 February 2007, 2:00 P.M. at the 8th Flr., Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
3. Submission of eligibility requirements	26 February 2007, 2:00 PM at the 8th Flr., Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila
4. Opening of Bids	26 February 2007, 2:00 PM at the 8th Flr., Operations Room, PMS Building, Arlegui Street, San Miguel, Manila

Bid documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of One Thousand Five Hundred Pesos (Php 1,500.00) to the PMS Cashier.

Only the bids of eligible bidders shall be opened in the presence of the bidders or their duly authorized representatives, as evidenced by the Special Power of Attorney or Board resolution. The opening of bids shall be done right after the checking of the eligibility requirements.

The PMS reserves the right to reject any or all bids, to waive any minor defects therein, to annul the bidding process, to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders, and to accept only the offer that is most advantageous to the government.

The PMS assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

(Sgd.) ASSEC. ELIZABETH M. GONZALES
Chairperson PMS-BAC

(PDI – February 5, 2007)

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Privatization and Management Office (PMO), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites Security Agencies to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project	Security Services
Location	Various locations in Metro Manila, Luzon & Mindanao
Approved Budget	P 3,559,680.00
Contract Duration	One Year
Delivery Period	April 2007

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding and have key personnel and equipment (owned, leased or under purchase) available for the execution of the project. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

Bid Documents will be available starting **6 February 2007** from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the 4th Floor PMO-BAC Secretariat upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **Eight Thousand Nine Hundred Pesos (P8,900.00) cash.**

The PMO-BAC will conduct its **Pre-Bid Conference** open to all interested bidders on **19 February 2007 at 10:00 a.m.**, 6th floor Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City.

Deadline for submission of Bids and Eligibility Requirements shall be on 1 March 2007 at 10:00 a.m. All bids must be accompanied by a **Bid Security** in the form of manager's check / cashier's check in the amount of **P35,596.80** or if surety bond in the amount of **P88,992.00** or if bank guarantee in the amount of **P53,395.20. Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Bid Opening shall be on **1 March 2007 at 10:00** a.m. at the 6th floor Privatization and Management Office, 104 Gamboa St., Legaspi Village, Makati City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders or their representatives who choose to attend.

The PMO-BAC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Moreover, **the PMO-BAC reserves its right to reject any or all bid proposals, waive any formality in the bid requirements, declare the bidding a failure without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders, or award the contract to the bidder whose offer is the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bid,** and most advantageous to the Government.

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE (BAC)
PRIVATIZATION AND MANAGEMENT OFFICE
104 Gamboa Street, Legaspi Village, Makati City
Tel. No. 893-7096; 817-8762
Fax No. 893-2290 * Website: www.pmo.gov.ph

Approved by:
(Sgd.) CRISANTA S. LEGASPI
Chairperson, PMO-BAC

(PDI – February 5 & 12, 2007)

MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER

Contract Reference Number
Name of the Contract
Location of the Contract
Revised on: July 29, 2004

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract	Construction of 25,000 gallons, 17 meters Steel Tower Elevated Water Tank and Deep Well Drilling
Location	MARIANO MARCOS MEMORIAL HOSPITAL & MEDICAL CENTER
Brief description	Construction of the Steel Tower Elevated Water Tank would include General requirement, which include fabrication works, site works civil works and equipment rental, steel works, concrete works & form works Plumbing Works: deep well drilling would be 2 deep well sites which include site works, deep well casing, pumps & appurtenances
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php3,356,294.42
Contract Duration	90 days - Civil works

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows.

Civil Works

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	February 19 - 21, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	February 22 - 23, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 27 to March 01, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	March 5, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	March 8 - 16, 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference	March 16, 2007
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 30, 2007

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Brgy. # 6 San Julian, Batac, Ilocos Norte, upon their submission of an LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,000.00 to the Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php5,000.00 to the Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center - Cashier.

The Mariano Marcos Memorial Hospital & Medical Center assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) LOUIE A. GUERRERO, M.D., FPCR
BAC Chairman

(PDI Feb 5 & 12, 2007)

WHAT'S INSIDE
■ **Unity Congress** today; Baumann in town /A32

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Miñoza is champ again

Rosales sets up 1-2 Filipino finish with sizzling 65

FRANKIE Miñoza savors his second RP Open victory. ROMY HOMILLADA

By Musong R. Castillo

IT WAS A PERFECT ending to a much-awaited Philippine Open comeback.

And Frankie Miñoza, an absentee the three previous years, had the right word for it—"beautiful."

Playing what he said was "relaxed" golf all week, Miñoza hung tough despite a shaky start to fire a one-under-par 71 yesterday and win Asia's oldest championship by two strokes over his explosive-finishing countryman Gerald Rosales.

With benign conditions at Wack Wack's fabled East course prevailing throughout the day, the country's No. 1 shotmaker battled a suddenly erratic swing early in the final round before steadying

MIÑOZA/ A34

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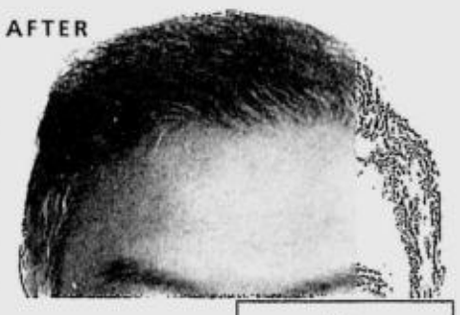
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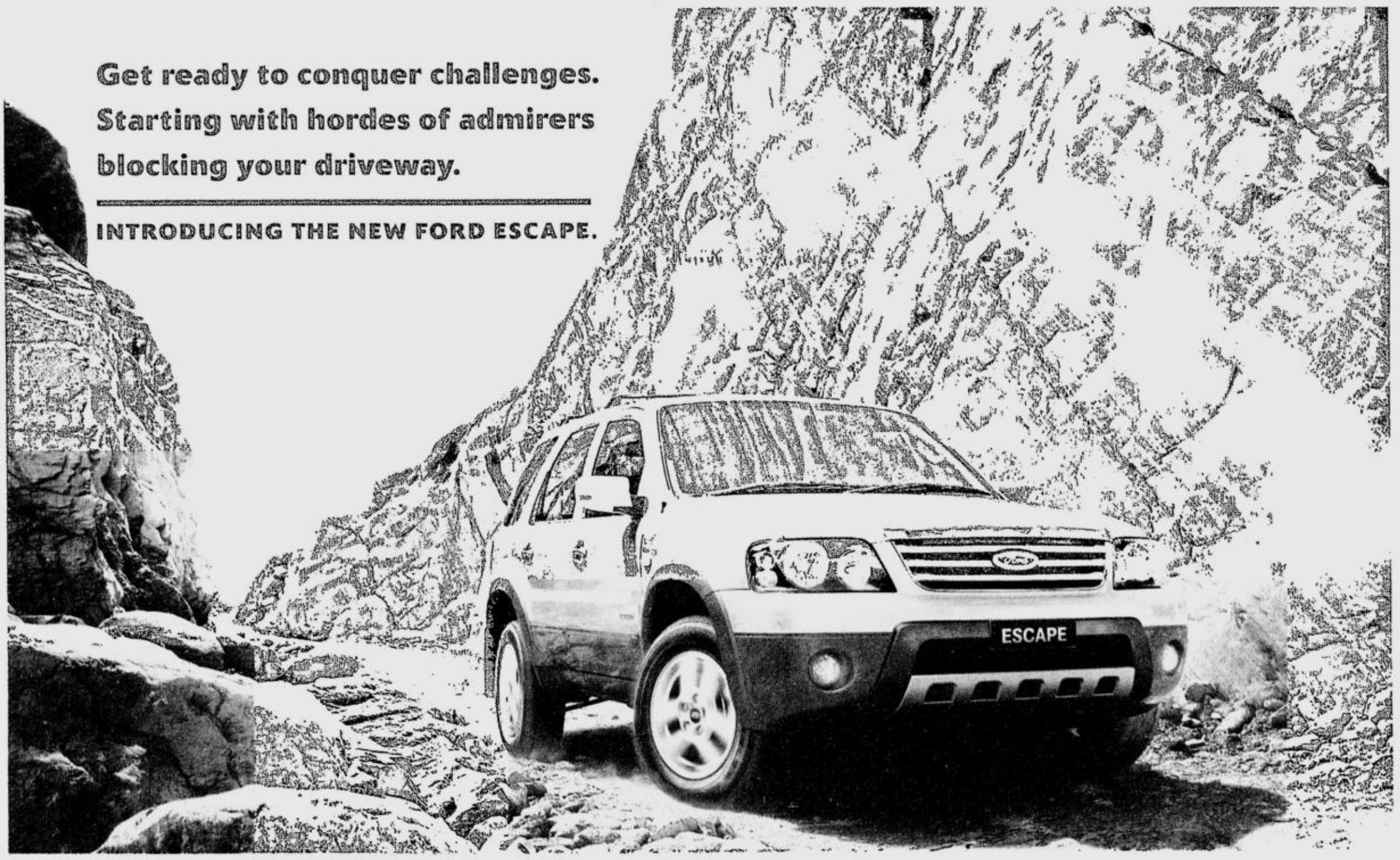

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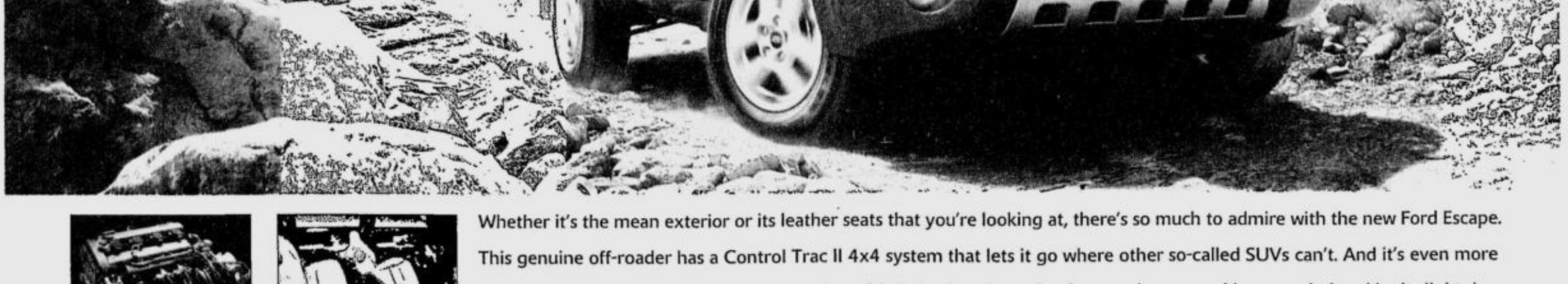


Will the basketball tug-of-war end with the Unity Congress? The main players and their take on the controversy:

GO TENG KOK
President, Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP)

THE NEWLY INSTALLED PRESIdent of the decades-old BAP has figured in several controversial quarrels with members and officials of the local Olympic family, POC. Concurrently the president of the Philippine Amateur Track and Field Association and, until last year, the president of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines, Go claims to have "excellent connections" with Fiba officials, including former president Carl Ching Menky of Hong Kong and Fiba-Asia secretary general Dato Teoh Cho Hock of Malaysia. Go insists that he is his own man. "I am independent-minded," he says. "No one can dictate to me, not even Graham Lim (BAP sec-gen and Go's friend who is appealing a government order to deport him to Taiwan), Alentajan (BAP counsel Bonifacio) and Lito Alvarez (erstwhile BAP deputy sec-gen who is very close to top BAP supporter Bert Lina)," he says. "I am willing to attend the Unity Congress but they probably don't want me to be there. They (SBP officials) have not told me about what's there for the BAP to look forward to." Go says he is for basketball unity, but insists on one thing—a role in the SBP for Lim. "*Bata ko 'yan, hindi ko iyan pababayaan* (He's my man, I will never turn my back on him)."

MANNY V. PANGILINAN
President, Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP)

THE VERY INFLUENTIAL BUSIness tycoon, the reluctant "third man" in the basketball unification triumvirate, decides to give unity moves his best shot after the international basketball federation (Fiba) "blessed" the roadmap of the SBP. Pangilinan has returned from Geneva and Bangkok, where he and his group held talks with top Fiba officials, bearing the message of harmony and decisiveness. The chair of telecommunications giant PLDT and Smart and managing director of Hong Kong conglomerate First Pacific is convinced that the Fiba will lift its suspension on the Philippines if the SBP strictly follows Fiba guidelines to the letter. Although the BAP contests his ascension to the SBP presidency, saying that he is only a "mediator" between the BAP and itsa rival Pilipinas Basketball, Pangilinan is unperturbed. The SBP says there is nothing in the Tokyo joint communique that bars Pangilinan from being elected as president. Pangilinan is also unmoved by reports that the BAP would boycott the Unity Congress. "We can move with some difficulty without the BAP playing its part in the communique," he says. "But we have to start somewhere. The door, however, is still open for any form of cooperation with the BAP."

SEN. JINGGOY ESTRADA
Chair, Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP)

THE BASKETBALL-LOVING LAWmaker happily accepts the presidency of the BAP but is ousted by his own men a few weeks later when he agrees to create a united front for local basketball with Pangilinan and the SBP in Hong Kong. Members of the BAP board accuse Estrada of not consulting them and of selling out the interests of the association. Not wanting to further rock the boat, the senator decides not to contest his ouster. "I admit that I decided on my own, but I believe basketball will never go wrong when I decided to merge the BAP with PB," he says. Under the Hong Kong agreement, Estrada will sit as chair of the SBP with Pangilinan as president. Estrada's dethronement, however, comes after the merger —a step farther from former BAP president Joey Lina's approval of unification talks with PB—which the Fiba desires. Estrada continues to sit as SBP chair, in the absence of a formal BAP notice about his ineligibility, and is expected to attend today's Unity Congress. "I will attend the congress as a senator who will help basketball in the country get back to its feet," he says. He is said to be annoyed by reports that certain BAP officials are afraid they will lose their jobs once the SBP finally gets the Fiba nod.

ASI Taulava scores off China's Bateer Menke in the 2002 Asian Games in Busan, South Korea. INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

Unity Congress today; Baumann hits town

By June Navarro and Francis Ochoa

A DAY BEFORE THE CRUcial congress that hopes to put basketball stakeholders from all over the country under one roof takes place, Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP) officials finally found a reason to smile.

The country finally has an assurance that it is close to competing in the international scene after a marathon 23-hour meeting with top officials of the international basketball federation (Fiba), including secretary general Patrick Baumann, who finally accepted an invitation to come to Manila and attend the Unity Congress today.

"It is done," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala in a text message to the INQUIRER early yesterday morning. "Baumann arriving in Manila."

Later yesterday, Eala, also the official spokesperson of the SBP, held a press conference at the PBA press room and announced the same development.

'Work has been done'

Although he did not dwell on the "gory" details of the meeting, Eala said "we think the work has been done and it's time to move forward for Philippine basketball."

A statement from Baumann (inset) clinches the SBP's bid for Fiba accreditation.

Eala was part of a five-man group led by PLDT chief Manny V. Pangilinan that went to Bangkok to seek an audience with Baumann, the all-powerful Fiba secretary general, his Fiba-Asia counterpart Dato Yeoh Choo Hock and Fiba-Asia president Sheik Saud before the Unity Congress is held today at the Dusit Hotel in Makati.

Pangilinan is expected to be named president in elections that are expected to be a mere formality as far as the completion of the Tokyo accord is concerned.

Also with Eala and Pangilinan in Bangkok were Junjun Capistrano, who represented the UAAP in the Pilipinas Basketball (PB) organization, SBP lawyer Marievic Añonuevo and PBA chair Ricky Vargas.

Also present were BAP officials Bonifacio Alentajan and EVP Christian Tan, who were herded into the same talks by Baumann.

"The three-man panel has been able to agree on the final talking points which will pave the way for the culmination of the Tokyo communique in the unity congress tomorrow (today)," said Eala.

Vargas himself admitted the success of the trip when the group arrived from Bangkok yesterday at around noontime.

"*Tapos na* (It is done), we have unity already," he said also via a text message to the Inquirer. "Let's just wait for Baumann to make the official announcement."

Baumann's presence in the Unity Congress is a sign that the Fiba will finally acknowledge the SBP as the country's national federation for basketball. His decision to join the congress came after the Bangkok meeting, which started at 5:30 p.m. Saturday, ended past 4 a.m. yesterday.

'Lifting of suspension looms'
(Statement of Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann)

During [the] meeting the Three-Man Panel agreed on all major outstanding issues and agreed to proceed with the Unity Congress on February 5th in Manila.

Fiba and Fiba-Asia approved the agreement and fully support the holding of the Unity Congress. With this Unity Congress the role of the Three-Man Panel will have been successfully completed in accordance with the Tokyo Communique and the merger between BAP and PB consumated, resulting into a new national federation for basketball with new structures, by-laws and leaders.

This paves the way for the official POC and Fiba accreditations and for the lifting of the suspension of the Philippines from international competitions.

Pulse of people: What they say about cage row

Compiled by Jasmine W. Payo, June Navarro, Marc Reyes, Francis Ochoa

WITH A CALCULATING TONE and a grim demeanor, PBA commissioner Noli Eala dared an official of the Basketball Association of the Philippines to explain the sport's predicament to the people who deserve to know more.

"Explain to the Filipino people, in Plaza Miranda, why the Philippines cannot join the [2007] Fiba-Asia [tournament]," said the former broadcaster, referring to the Fiba-imposed sanction that bars the country from competing in international tournaments, including the 2007 qualifier for the Beijing Olympics.

That was almost a month ago.

As it turns out, there is, indeed a lot of explaining to do in front of the public, which has grown weary of all the bickerings and hopes to see just one thing—the Philippines playing in international competitions.

With basketball as the unofficial national sport and pastime of the country, the INQUIRER sports staff decided to go around the streets days before today's Unity Congress to ask people from all walks of life what their views are on the issue.

This is what they had to say:

* * *

ABES

BAGA

LUCAS

MASIGAN

AGUILA

LACDAO

• "This is a sport that most Filipinos love. *Hindi man tayo manalo sa* Asian championships *o* Olympics, at least *kasali tayo*. On the BAP's effort to stop the congress from happening, they should stop thinking about themselves and their personal interests."—Nicasio Cruz, 60, avid basketball fan and horseracing aficionado

• "I think basketball fans are not willing to really get into the details of the issue but would rather see things fix themselves and see the country taking part in Southeast Asian Games, Asian Games and even the Olympics. It's a pity because we have the best players nowadays to represent the country."—Napoleon Bagä, senior citizen

• "I'm tired of reading their criticisms in the newspaper. I want something more concrete like seeing the national team play in international tournaments again."—Mario Mendoza, 27, production manager of a Makati-based PR firm

• "The warring parties in basketball should set their priorities right, especially the BAP. Do away with the personal interests and move to make the countless Filipino basketball fans proud again by witnessing their national team compete against the best of the world."—Aldo San Pedro, 29, area manager (Manila), Sharp Philippines Inc.

• "*Wala na dapat pinagawayan pa kasi nasa* SBP *naman ang mga ligang may* players *na dapat mag*-represent *ng bansa sa* international meets."—Jan Lester Masigan, 18, student

• "I just hope the BAP finally sees the light and recognizes which group really benefits basketball. I just want to see our players play in international competitions. Who knows, we might even get to play in the Olympics."—Wowie Lucas, 33, president and CEO www.marikinabiz.com

• "The BAP has performed below par for so many years and I just can't imagine that the people running it still have the guts to say that they are for our country's basketball unity when obviously they are not. The BAP should give way or face the wrath of the Filipino hoop fans."—Henry Abes, 38, general manager of Subic Telecommunications Co. Inc. and president and CEO of gameface.ph

• "SBP must also exercise the power they have to set things straight because they have the powerful leagues behind them like the PBA, PBL, UAAP and NCAA."—Joel Baltazar, party-providing business owner.

• "We're probably the laughing stock of the international basketball community, unable to agree even among ourselves what direction Philippine basketball should take."—Edmund Erguiza, 33, human resources practitioner

• "The issue has been going on for almost two years, maybe our leaders have lost the capacity to solve the issue among themselves."—Alexander Servidad, Bangkok-based language teacher.

• "The SBP should continue reaching out while the BAP should join the unity congress, respect the proceedings and prove that it's a team player."—Dundee Espina, 32, regional sales manager of a leading electronics marketing company

• "We should give new faces a chance to re-shape Philippine basketball and not the tired old ones who just couldn't do well at it, like Go Teng Kok and his group."—Ren Aguila, 26, writer

• "I really lament the fact that Filipinos have that habit of washing their linen in public. [These basketball officials] only have vested interests."—Aga Jose, 52, English instructor

• "I agree with Fiba banning us from international play. We must have one governing body dealing with our basketball affairs. I think it's stupid that both sides are bickering about it until now."—Mon Nieves, 28, hardware store owner

• "POC officials are right when they said that the SBP officials are intelligent enough to handle the situation."—Domar Alviar, 27, PR practitioner

Government Warning: Cigarette smoking is dangerous to your health.

HE'S BACK: Sentimental favorite Frankie Miñoza acknowledges the gallery after clinching the 2007 Philippine Open championship at Wack Wack East. ROMY HOMILLADA

Final round scores:

278—**Frankie Miñoza** 73-67-67-71, $47,550
280—**Gerald Rosales** 73-70-72-65, $32,550
283—Liang Wen-chong (Chn) 68-69-71-75, $18,300
284—Lin Keng-chi (Tpe) 72-72-74-66 $14,790
285—Chapchai Nirat (Tha) 73-73-72-67, $12,300
286—Anthony Kang (US) 68-74-76-68; Richard Moir (Aus) 74-72-70-70; Neven Basic (Aus) 71-67-76-72; Prayad Marksaeng (Tha) 69-74-69-74, $8,257.5 each
287—David Bransdon (Aus) 69-73-73-72, $5,910
288—**Artemio Murakami** 71-72-75-70; **Benjie Magada** 71-68-78-71; Tony Carolan (Aus) 74-75-69-70; Taichiro Kiyota (Jpn) 70-74-72-72; Digvijay Singh (Ind) 69-72-75-72; **Angelo Que** 75-72-68-73, $4,695 each
289—Lu Wei-chih (Tpe) 71-71-75-72; Bryan Saltus (US) 71-73-73-72; Jason Knutzon (US) 68-72-75-74, $3,790
291—Panuwat Muenlek (Tha) 72-72-77-70; Shigemasa Higaki (Jpn) 72-76-72-71; **Tony Lascuña** 78-69-72-72, $3,420 each
292—Stephen Scahill (NZ) 76-73-72-71; **Jay Bayron (A)** 68-74-78-72, Kao Bo-song (Tpe) 71-74-75-72, Park Jun-won (Kor) 69-74-76-73; Chawalit Plaphol (Tha) 76-69-73-74, $3,105 each
293—**Elmer Salvador** 72-77-75-69; Lin Chie-hsiang (Tpe) 74-73-74-72; Han Lee (Kor) 70-72-78-73; Kim Hye-dong (Kor) 73-70-77-73; Airil Rizman Zahari (Mas) 73-71-76-73; Mitchell Brown (Aus) 76-70-73-74; Clay Devers (US) 71-70-77-75; Rick Gibson (Can) 71-70-75-77, $2,576.25 each
294—Adam Le Vesconte (Aus) 72-72-77-73; Wang Ter-chang (Tpe) 68-75-77-74; Adam Blyth (Aus) 74-67-78-75; Ross Bain (Sco) 73-72-74-75; Gurbaaz Mann (Ind) 70-75-68-81, $2,130 each
295—Yeh Chang-ting (Tpe) 74-73-78-70; Mark Brown (NZ) 72-77-72-74; Soe Kyaw Naing (Myn) 72-73-75-75; Rowan Beste (Aus) 72-71-76-76; Gavin Flint (Aus) 72-74-73-76; Martin Rominger (Sui) 73-72-72-78, $1,800 each
296—Lu Wen-teh (Tpe) 72-74-78-72; Lin Wen-hong (Tpe) 74-74-76-72; Uttam Singh Mundy (Ind) 75-70-76-75; Chang Tse-peng (Tpe) 72-72-77-75; Somkiat Srisanga (Tha) 76-70-75-75; David Gleeson (Aus) 73-71-75-77; Sung Mao-chang (Tpe) 71-72-74-79, $1,410 each
297—Kwanchai Tannin (Tha) 71-76-78-72; Hwang Jae-min (Kor) 75-73-77-72; Olle Nordberg (Swe) 70-76-75-76; **Marlon Dizon** 73-71-75-78; Jarrod Moseley (Aus) 69-71-78-79, **Antonio Asistio II** (A) 75-68-74-80, $1,110 each

Miñoza RP Open champ again

From page A31

himself infront of an adoring throng that went with him all the way.

"This is a beautiful comeback," said Miñoza, who finished with a 10-under-par 278 total to win the $47,550 (about P2.3 million) champion's prize. "The key this week was that I played relaxed golf. I never felt any pressure at all."

It was the second Open title for the native of Bukidnon, undoubtedly the Philippines' greatest contribution to international pro golf. And Miñoza did not bat an eyelash in saying this one's sweeter compared to the first in 1998.

"Because I'm 47 (years old) now," said Miñoza, who started bogey-bogey but picked up shots when it mattered to keep China's Liang Wenchong at bay in the front nine and Rosales in the back.

Rosales made it a rare 1-2 Filipino finish with a run that many thought was improbable at the heavily wooded layout, shooting a tournament-best 65 set up by a 30 on the back nine, where he gunned down an eagle and four birdies.

Though records were unavailable, experts said that was the first time in the modern era and in a foreign-flavored Open, that Filipinos bagged the top two places in this event.

The 30-year-old Rosales, who won an all-Filipino Open in 2000 at Riviera, leapfrogged from a sixth-place tie to solo second, worth $32,550.

Liang, who started the day just a stroke behind Miñoza in second spot, submitted a 75 to finish third at 283. He won $18,300.

Taiwan's Lin Keng-chi assembled a sizzling 66 for fourth at 284 while Thai Chapchai Nirat fired a 67 to end up fifth another stroke back.

Anthony Kang of the United States, the 1999 winner, shot a 68 for 286 like Aussies Richard Moir (70) and Neven Basic (72) and Prayad Marksaeng (74).

Miñoza was running full steam starting Friday, shooting 67s in the second and third rounds to wrest a one-stroke lead and put himself in position to winning a 15th international title since the greenskeeper son from Del Monte, Bukidnon, gained prominence early in the last decade.

The impressive win finally wiped out memories of Frankie's long misadventures at Wack Wack's East, the most gruesome coming in the 2002 edition won by Rick Gibson. That year, Miñoza shot a macabre 81 in the third round after a 70-72 start. He finished the tournament with a 75 for 298.

Despite his bogey-bogey start, Miñoza, who skipped the event from 2005 because of differences with the leadership of the National Golf Association of the Philippines, bounced back with birdies on three of his next seven holes to establish a three-shot advantage at the turn.

The Chinese wilted from there even as Rosales was steadily creeping up the leaderboard.

"He doesn't play that way," Miñoza said of the 30-year-old Liang, who is his regular practice partner at the Japan Tour. "I don't know what happened to him."

Minoza, whose last win came in the 2001 Fuji Sankei Classic in Japan, admitted hearing the roar of a separate gallery that followed Rosales, sister and LPGA champion Jennifer.

Gerald broke his second place tie at 7-under with Liang when he knocked in a curling 25-footer for birdie to actually take the clubhouse lead at 8-under and put the pressure on Minoza.

Australian David Bransdon was alone in 10th place after a 72 for 287. Then came the group made up of Filipinos Artemio Murakami (70), Benjie Magada (71) and Angelo Que (73) at level 288.

Canlubang standout and reigning RP champ Jay Bayron rallied with a level 72 to win the low amateur contest over Tonlits Asistio, who blew a three-shot lead after ballooning to an 80. Bayron finished with a 292 tally for a five-stroke victory.

Frankie-Roger partnership back

By Musong R. Castillo

THE ADVENT OF MODERN EQUIPMENT, longer golf balls and even the arrival of the non-traditional attire were easy changes that Frankie Miñoza has been able to adapt to.

But when it comes to tinkering with his golf swing, he trusts only one guy.

Roger Retuerto resigned from a high-paying job as trainer of the Brunei national team at the request of Miñoza, and honed his ward back to his old tip-top form.

"He told me to come back here and help him out," Retuerto told the INQUIRER in Filipino, minutes after Minoza finally completed his mastery of Wack Wack's East course to win the 91st Philippine Open yesterday.

RETUERTO (right) with his student.

"He talks to no one else but me when it comes to his swing," he added. "Frankie is almost like a son to me and I really cannot turn him down.

The swing coach is having no second thoughts staying and keeping his Bruneian employers on hold despite urgent appeals for him to return.

"Working here is more fun, especially if you're working with someone like Frankie," Retuerto, who turns 60 next week, said. "He gives his everything just to perfect his game."

Retuerto said that Miñoza phoned him in July last year, complaining of a fade in his shots.

To solve it, Retuerto said he made Miñoza swing in just one plane and with a more circular motion to draw his shots.

Coach and player, whose partnership started in Del Monte, Bukidnon, when Frankie was still an amateur, did not talk at all during the final round.

But when they did meet, at the lobby of the men's locker room, the hug that followed in front of so many people and their teary eyes said it all.

To Fiba: Where goes Mr. Go?

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

IT WAS NEVER EASY SAYING NICE things about Go Teng Kok.

Many people hated his guts, his style.

Yes, you don't have to ask their opinion about GTK if you wanted peace and start a happy day.

If you dared do, you'd get bombarded with the sorriest adjectives this side of Websterville.

In fact, we no longer gave a damn what the guy did—until he was suddenly chosen to head the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

Why him, of all people?

* * *

It was a very vital post.

As president of that turbulent sports group, GTK was pushed into a hot, extremely critical spot.

He could remake or break the No. 1 sport in the country, whose fanatical following has elevated basketball into a near-religion hereabouts.

Well, it's open knowledge that the BAP is in deep trouble, on the verge of extinction, a fate that could only be blamed on the selfish figures that had dragged RP basketball to its lowest level.

* * *

So, after GTK was appointed BAP president, there followed nasty talk he would resort to sly means, he would skirmish and dig deep into his bag of foxy tricks to save the beleaguered association, keep the ship afloat, so to say.

A grizzled Chinese pirate fighting to stay alive through the turbulence his backers had foolishly stirred.

Well, contrary to what many sports fans had suspected, I'm not a card-carrying GTK hater.

Naturally, I also took pity on the fellow after he was put in what had looked like a no-win situation.

* * *

Now, hold it.

Truth is the BAP presidency was not exactly the dead-end for GTK.

Villainous as he had been, there was also this great chance of GTK turning into a hero.

You are free to believe this or not.

I am no lover of the anti-hero, but I turned into an instant Go Teng Kok fan a week ago.

All these nasty thoughts on who GTK was, what he was up to, were changed after a brief phone talk with him the other Sunday.

All he had to do was swear he'd be working for unity in Philippine basketball.

For the record, that vow—to go on a love mission for RP basketball—was faithfully chronicled in my column here last Jan. 30.

* * *

In that piece, Go swore that:

1) He was no running dog of BAP secgen Graham Lim, responsible for some of the most ignominious showing of the RP team in international tournaments.

2) He would resign all his positions in RP sports if he failed to lift the Fiba suspension on RP basketball.

3) He would go all out to foster unity in Philippine basketball.

You could feel angels sing as he made the noble pledges.

But as we went to press, it was no longer clear whether Go would resort to a violation or go for the basket.

* * *

Repeat: Your reporter here was converted into an instant GTK fan after that phone talk.

Why? Because he made all the great pronouncements, as though he was speaking under oath—on the bedside of his dying mother.

Of course, my blood pressure shot up after it was first announced GTK would not attend today's basketball Unity Congress at the Dusit Hotel.

There next came reports he would still show up, deliver a speech then leave.

Reports conflicted on what GTK was up to, where Mr. Go will be going today.

Actually, I was made a laughing stock after my last endorsement of GTK.

Have I, too, been paid?

They were shouting claims GTK, after all, was not capable of turning a new leaf.

So what? As long as Fiba officials, reported to be on their way to Manila last night, come up with a respectable ruling based on today's Unity Congress.

It's either another flagrant foul or a victory basket.

BAP joining Unity Congress

By June Navarro

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION OF THE Philippines has no choice but to attend today the congress of basketball's major stakeholders called by the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas.

This developed after BAP executive vice president Christian Tan and legal counsel Bonifacio Alentajan were made to sign a waiver preventing the BAP from seeking a temporary restraining order and assuring the presence of the organization's top officials in the congress at the Dusit Hotel in Makati City.

PBA commissioner Noli Eala said the BAP officials signed the document in the presence of Fiba secretary-general Patrick Baumann, Fiba-Asia president Sheik Saud and Fiba-Asia secgen Dato Yeoh.

"After much discussion and exchange on how to fully implement the Tokyo accord, the BAP has agreed to attend," said Eala in a hastily called press conference yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Eala had just arrived from Bangkok along with SBP officials Manny V. Pangilinan, Ricky Vargas, Marievic Añonuevo and Pilipinas Basketball vice president Junjun Capistrano after a marathon meeting with Fiba and BAP officials that lasted 12 hours.

Tan and Alentajan, who were invited by Thailand basketball authorities to a Fiba-sanctioned tournament, subbed for BAP president Go Teng Kok in the three-man panel.

Go skipped the meeting as he is in mourning his mother's death, but authorized Tan and Alentajan to negotiate for the BAP in his behalf.

Eala said Tan and Alentajan were asked by Baumann to discuss certain points which the BAP wanted to clear.

"The discussion looked comprehensive and the points raised by the BAP were addressed in the meeting," said Eala.

The SBP had expressed fears that the BAP would throw a monkey wrench on the unification process by seeking a TRO stopping the Unity congress.

Blu Girls drop heartbreaker to Kiwis

TAINAN CITY, TAIWAN—THE PHILIPPINE Blu Girls humbled the Singaporeans anew but dropped a close decision to New Zealand at the start of the second round of the Asia/Oceania Olympic Qualifier yesterday.

The Blu Girls tallied a record 18 hits to secure their second win over the Singaporeans, with Kimster Liwas contributing two-run home runs in the fifth inning to highlight their 14-2 win.

However, the Blu Girls failed to sustain their momentum against New Zealand to lose, 6-5, in their tight afternoon match.

The Philippine bets were ahead, 5-3 at the top of the seventh inning but the Kiwis got to pitcher Joy Lasquite and scored three runs in the bottom half of the final frame.

The Kiwis, looking to return to the Olympics after they missed out in 2004, now have five wins as against a solo loss to Chinese Taipei in the first round.

The loss left the Blu Girls with only a shot at third place and they have to beat the two Korean teams to be able to secure the spot.

The Blu Girls were playing against North Korea at presstime.

Bryant outshines Arenas

Lakers star powers LA past Washington Wizards

WASHINGTON—KOBE BRYANT won his much anticipated rematch with Gilbert Arenas, scoring 39 points to lead the Los Angeles Lakers over the Washington Wizards, 118-102, in the NBA on Saturday.

Bryant made 14 of 26 shots, was 9-of-10 from the free throw line and had six rebounds and six assists in 44 minutes for the Lakers. His highlights included a 360-degree dunk, but he mostly helped his team more with a steady performance that outshone the erratic Arenas.

Arenas went 9-for-29 from the field and finished with 37 points—mainly because he was 16-for-17 from the free throw line.

DeShawn Stevenson added 17 points, and Caron Butler had 15 for the Wizards, who are 0-2 since Antawn Jamison's injury.

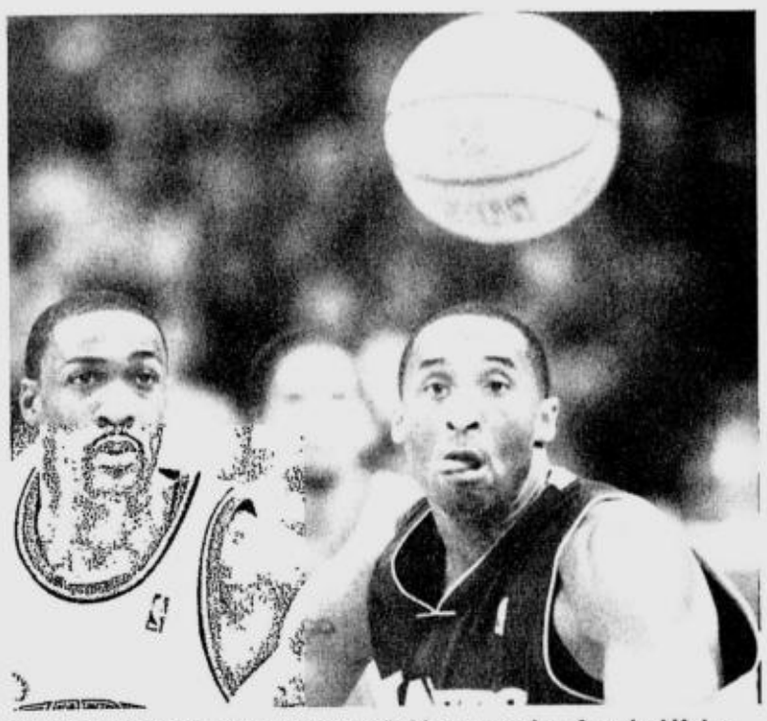
Smush Parker scored 20 points, Lamar Odom had 19 points and 11 rebounds, and Andrew Bynum finished with 12 points and 13 rebounds for the Lakers.

In other games, it was New York 94, Orlando 86; Charlotte 98, Golden State 90; Indiana 116, Memphis 110; Miami 117, Milwaukee 98; New Orleans 87, Houston 74; Dallas 94, Minnesota 93; Utah 108, Phoenix 105; Sacramento 94, Denver 87; Chicago 88, Portland 86

In Charlotte, North Carolina, Raymond Felton scored eight of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and Gerald Wallace added 21 points and 16 rebounds to lead Charlotte over Golden State.

Felton, forced to play a lot of shooting guard after Derek Anderson left with a sprained right ankle in the first quarter, shot 8-of-19 for the Bobcats, who won despite shooting 42 percent and getting outrebounded by seven.

Baron Davis had 21 points, Al Harrington added 17 and Andris Biedrins had 15 points and a career-high 18 rebounds for the Warriors.



WASHINGTON'S Gilbert Arenas (left) engages Los Angeles' Kobe Bryant in a chase for the loose ball. AP

In Orlando, Florida, Eddy Curry bulled his way to 27 points, reserve Channing Frye added 18, and New York seized control early and held on to beat Orlando.

Stephon Marbury had 14 points and six assists for New York, which held Orlando to just 37.7 percent shooting.

Backup center Darko Milicic led the Magic with a career-high 19 points. Dwight Howard added 15 points and 11 rebounds. Hedo Turkoglu had 13 points, but hit only four of 15 shots.

In Phoenix, Mehmet Okur scored 19 of his 29 points in the second half, including a decisive 19-footer with 5.1 seconds remaining, and Utah beat Phoenix.

Deron Williams also scored 28 and added 10 assists for the Jazz, who have handed Phoenix three of its 10 losses this season and have won four straight against the Suns overall.

In Milwaukee, Dwyane Wade capped his special weekend with 32 points and 11 assists, and Jason Kapono added a career-high 28 points to lead Miami past Milwaukee.

Wade, who went 11-of-17 from the field, also extended his franchise-best streak of consecutive games with at least 20 points to 14 as Miami won its third straight. Wade had his collegiate jersey retired Saturday in a ceremony during the Providence-Marquette game.

Wade's performance trumped Mo Williams' career-best 38 points on 16-of-31 shooting that led five players in double figures for the Bucks, who have lost four in a row and 15 of the last 17.

Shaquille O'Neal, plagued by first-half foul trouble, quietly had 20 points in 20 minutes for Miami, which got two points from newcomer Eddie Jones.

In Dallas, All-Star snub Josh Howard and Jason Terry both had 22 points and Dallas held on to win its 15th straight home game.

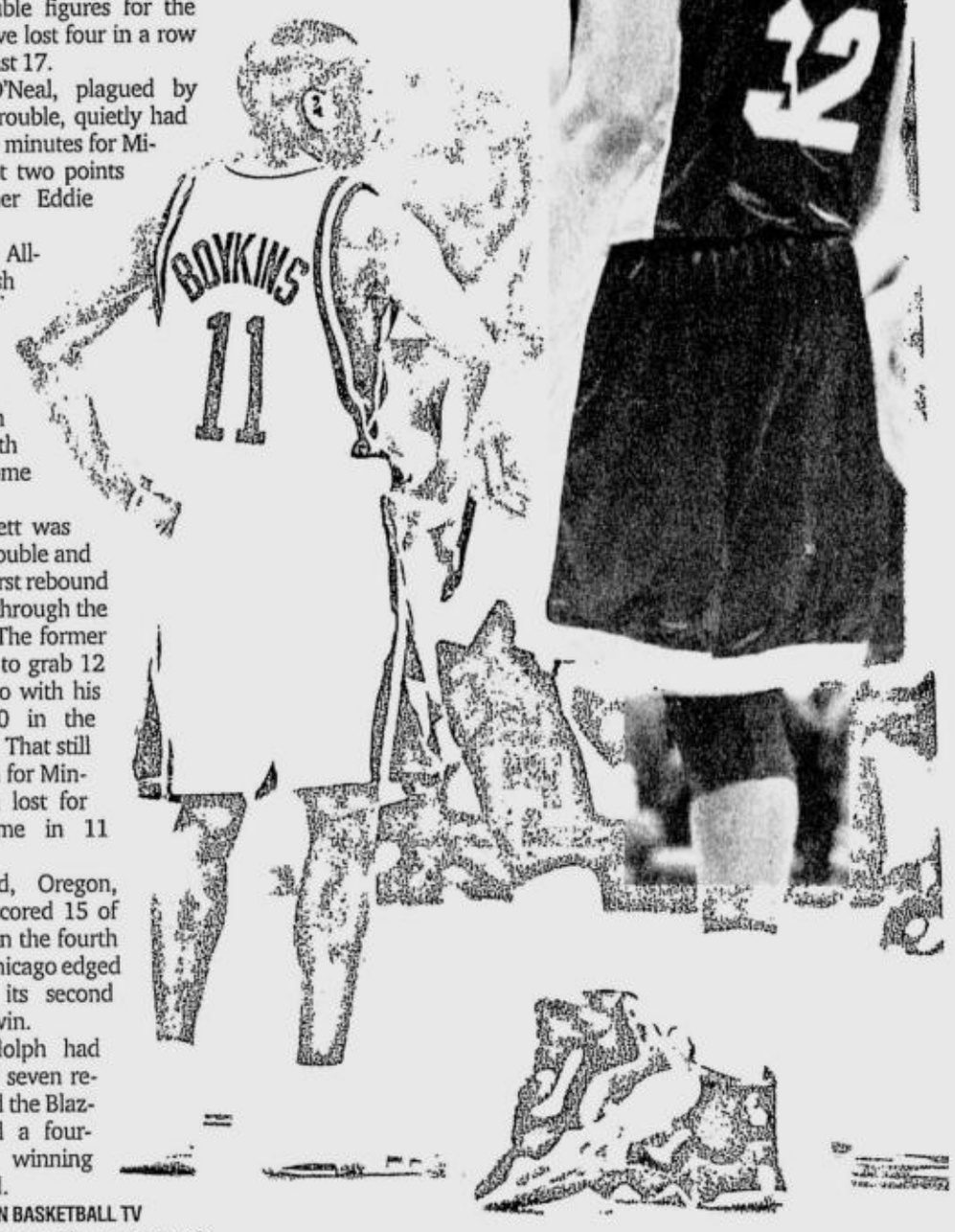
Kevin Garnett was in early foul trouble and didn't get his first rebound until midway through the third quarter. The former MVP went on to grab 12 rebounds to go with his 25 points—10 in the fourth quarter. That still wasn't enough for Minnesota, which lost for the ninth time in 11 games.

In Portland, Oregon, Ben Gordon scored 15 of his 33 points in the fourth quarter and Chicago edged Portland for its second straight road win.

Zach Randolph had 27 points and seven rebounds to lead the Blazers, who had a four-game home winning streak stopped.

NBA TODAY ON BASKETBALL TV

9 a.m.—LA Clippers vs Toronto (replays @ 4 p.m. & 9:30 p.m.)



SHAQUILLE' O Neal dwarfs Earl Boykins during a lull in their game. AP

Hingis trips foe, claims Pacific title

TOKYO—SECOND-SEEDED MARTINA Hingis overpowered Ana Ivanovic, 6-4, 6-2, on Sunday to win a record fifth Pan Pacific Open title.

Hingis, who lost to Elena Dementieva in the final here last year, relied on solid groundstrokes on her way to the straight-sets win over the 19-year-old Serbian player.

"I'm very proud of my record here," said Hingis. "I knew going into today's match that I could make the record if I won."

Hingis previously won this tournament in 1997, 1999, 2000 and 2002 and was tied with Lindsay Davenport for the most titles here before Sunday's win.

It was Hingis' first Tier I singles title since winning in Rome in 2006. *AP*

MARTINA Hingis celebrates a point. AP

Els says he's ready for Tiger this time

DUBAI—ERNIE ELS PLEDGED TO MOVE heaven and earth on Sunday to repel any challenge from old nemesis Tiger Woods in the final round of the Dubai Desert Classic.

The big South African will take a three stroke lead over the American into the last 18 holes and that is five better off than last year when he started Sunday two down on him .

On that occasion he closed the gap with a tremendous final round only to lose at the first hole of a sudden-death playoff.

That still rankles with Els and he made no bones about his will to come up trumps this time around in what would be a huge boost to his confidence for the year ahead.

"I'm up for it. I'm really looking forward to it and I'd like to win it pretty badly. I'm in it for the long haul," he said after firing a four-under 68 in his third round.

"Tiger could get hot at any time so I'll be watching the leaderboard. There are other players obviously, but you've got to watch the number one player in the world."

In fact there are three players bunched between Woods and Els in joint second, two shots off the pace and all three have their chances as well of pulling off what would be a major upset.

Sweden's Henrik Stenson is based in Dubai and knows the Majlis course at the Emirates Golf Club well, although he was complaining of tiredness after his third round.

Jyoti Randhawa of India has bounced back to form in a big way this week and is taking inspiration from compatriot Jeev Milka Singh who won the prestigious Volvo Masters in Spain last year.

Ross Fisher of England, meanwhile, has been the revelation of the tournament leading after the first two rounds and earning warm praise from Els after they shared a round on Saturday.

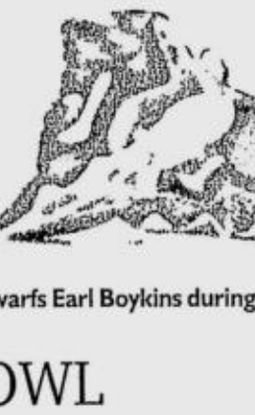
Four more Swedes—Niclas Fasth, Peter Hanson, Joakim Haeggman and Robert Karlsson are still in the hunt, while Thailand's latest discovery, Prom Meesawat, is upstaging his better-known compatriot Thongchai Jaidee.

But it will be all eyes on Woods as he looks to build on his win in the Buick Invitational in California last Sunday—his first tournament of the year. *AFP*

SUPER BOWL

Colts entrust hopes in hands of QB Manning

MIAMI—PEYTON Manning will lead the high-powered offense of the Indianapolis Colts against the Chicago Bears' swarming defense when the two teams square off in Super Bowl XLI on Sunday.



MANNING

The 30-year-old Manning is widely considered to be the best quarterback in the NFL but his Hall of Fame biography is sorely lacking a Super Bowl victory.

Indianapolis coach Tony Dungy said Manning "wants to play well every time out."

"I don't think he looks at this as a do-or-die moment," Dungy told reporters. "He looks at it as a big game we need to win.

"I don't think he's treated it any differently, and I think he's pretty much the same guy I've seen for the last five years."

If the Colts (15-4) are going to win their first Super Bowl since the franchise moved from Baltimore before the 1984 season, they will have to dominate one of the NFL's best defenses.

Led by combative linebacker Brian Urlacher, the Bears' defense has been compared to the 1985 squad that had two playoff shutouts before whipping the New England Patriots 46-10 in Super Bowl XX in New Orleans.

Chicago (15-3) beat Seattle in the divisional game 27-24 and whipped New Orleans 39-14 in the NFC title game. The 28-year-old Urlacher said he was not worried that both teams were able to move the ball.

"It doesn't concern me," he said. "The big stat I look at is wins and losses. We won both of those games so yards don't mean anything. Points win games. We make plays when we have to."

Dungy said he was going to get twice Indianapolis 500 winner Helio Castroneves to give a pep talk to his team before the game.

"I want him to address the team a little bit about what it means to win the biggest game in your sport," he said. "And he's also a Colts fan. So it will be a win-win situation for us." *Reuters*

RODNEY Jones (left) lands a punch to the face of Cory Spinks in their IBF junior middleweight championship bout. Spinks, however, won the fight. AP

Diaz wrests IBF crown; Spinks keeps belt

KISSIMMEE, FLORIDA—UNDEFEATED Chad Dawson won the WBC light-heavyweight title Saturday, handing defending champion Tomasz Adamek of Poland his first professional defeat.

"This was a long time coming," said Dawson, noting he had trained extremely hard the past several weeks for the fight. "I reached my potential in this fight."

Dawson's left-handed style, quickness and reach was too much for Adamek during much of the bruising fight. The American improved to 23-0 with the unanimous decision in the 12-round bout.

"He was much quicker that's why I lost," Adamek said through an interpreter.

Earlier, Julio Diaz took the IBF lightweight title when defending champion Jesus Chavez crumbled early in the third round after his right knee buckled while avoiding a punch. Also, Cory Spinks defended his IBF junior middleweight title with by outpointing Rodney Jones in an uneventful contest without any knockdowns.

But the marquee nightcap matching unbeaten fighters was easily the best battle.

Adamek, who took a beating for much of the contest, rallied in the 10th round, sending Dawson to the floor with a right to the nose, and he stayed on the attack through the 11th.

"I thought I was going to get him," Adamek said. "(But) After I knocked him down I didn't finish him."

"He caught me with a good punch," said Dawson, who won at least nine rounds on all three scoring cards. "He didn't hurt me. I got back up and went back to the game plan."

Dawson, wearing shiny red, white and blue trunks, sent the Polish fighter to the canvas with a minute left in the seventh round with a left hand to the stomach and appeared to be on his way to finishing Adamek (30-1).

"That was a slip," Adamek said. "I was tripped."

"It was a difficult fight because he was fast—the fastest I've every faced Adamek said. "He had good footwork and speed."

Diaz (34-3) was credited with his 25th knockout when Chavez—who was wearing a brace on the knee—could not get up, just 22 seconds into the third round.

"I thought he had a lot of soul, but I didn't see it tonight," said Diaz, who was already ahead on all three judges' cards. "He must've injured himself." *AP*

SPORTS

Veterans rule Milo run kickoff leg

BATANGAS CITY—FORMER NATIONAL CHAMPION CRESENCIANO Sabal of Sultan Kudarat and Maricel Maquilan of Polomok, South Cotabato, topped the inaugural elimination race of the 31st National Milo Marathon yesterday at Plaza Mabini here.

Sabal, who set the Milo Marathon 42-kilometer record of 2 hours 21 minutes 33 seconds during the 2005 finale in Manila, completed the 21K course in 1:07:06.

"Babawi ako ngayong taon. Mahal na mahal ko ang koronang iyon (I will try to regain the title, which is very dear to me, this year)," said Sabal, who was heavily favored to retain his title in the 30th national finals last December but finished seventh overall.

He said he tried to break his record and timed 1:08 at the turnaround point but lost steam in the process.

The 28-year-old Sabal, a member of the national training pool, secured a return ticket to the national finals on Nov. 18 along with Johnny España, who was second in 1:11:51, and third placer Jessie Ano, who placed third in 1:12:36.

Maquilan retained her leg title with an unchallenged clocking of 1:26:33.

Like Sabal, Maquilan proved too much for her rivals. Only six other male runners actually finished with faster times than her 1:26:33 clocking.

Settling for second and third places in the distaff side were Adjennie delos Santos (1:44:17) and Perly Yambao (1:47:11).

The top three finishers in the men's 5K run were Marjohn Salanawon (16:36), Aljean Diente (16:49) and Michael Roca (16:50).

The women's 5K run was ruled by Maquilan's younger sister Mary Joy, a first timer who finished the race in 22:41. Placing second and third, respectively, were Jackielyn Mirasol (23:00) and Jenny Manansala (23:16).

The 3K event for kids was topped by Danilo Gomez and Macrose Dichoso in the 10-12 age group and Rainey Hernandez and Marjorie Gayoba in the 6-9 category.

Milo Sports Events executive Pat Goc-ong fired the starting gun that flagged off 3,959 runners yesterday.

Puerto Princesa in Palawan will host next week's leg.

FORMER champ Cresenciano Sabal crosses the finish line unchallenged.

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UAAP SOFTBALL

Unscathed Lady Falcons whip UE

ADAMSON UNIVERSITY OVERWHELMED University of the East in an abbreviated game, 13-2, Saturday to move within two wins of a title sweep in the UAAP softball tournament at the University of Santo Tomas.

The Lady Falcons, unbeaten in six elimination-round games, will have to beat two tough teams, though—second-running UST at 9 a.m. tomorrow and third-running University of the Philippines on Saturday—to clinch the crown.

The Tigresses stayed in the hunt with a 17-0 shutout of the Ateneo Lady Eagles, also Saturday, for their fifth win in seven outings. The Lady Eagles remained winless in seven games.

UP is in third place with a 4-2 win-loss card, comfortably ahead of the fifth-placed UE batters (1-5).

In men's baseball yesterday at the Rizal Memorial ball park, Adamson and UST both avenged first-round setbacks to Ateneo and National, respectively.

The Soaring Falcons leveled their record to 3-3 by getting back at the Blue Eagles, now also 3-3, in a 4-3 squeaker. The Falcons never allowed the Blue Eagles to show at least a semblance of their 12-1 rout of the San Marcelino-based team in the first-round.

The Tigers also erased the stigma of their 8-3 loss to the Bulldogs with a 3-2 victory of their own.

The Tigers' fourth win in seven games put them behind idle frontrunner and defending champion UP (4-2), but ahead of the Blue Eagles and Falcons who are tied in third place.

NU is in the cellar with 2-5.

Marist cagers shoot down defending champ Bedans

MARIST SCHOOL BANKED ON AN ENDGAME scoring spree to oust defending champion San Beda-Manila, 16-13, yesterday and barge into the semifinals of the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament at the Marikina Sports Park gym.

Axel Arroyo scored six points in a 13-0 Marist run that erased a 3-11 deficit and gave the Marikina-based dribblers the top spot in Group A with a clean 3-0 record.

Marist takes on Don Bosco-Makati, which qualified in Group D with a 3-0 card in the semifinals.

Don Bosco-Mandaluyong (4-0) battles International Christian School (3-0) in the other Final Four encounter in the Adidas-backed tournament conceptualized by Cherifer product manager Tom Meneses and tournament director Edmundo "Ato" Badolato and organizer Bernard Ocampo.

Clint Villanueva topscored for the Bedans with eight points.

Siso siblings dominate junior tennis

CEBU—BERNADINE SISO DEMOLISHED THE baseline game of Jacob Lagman, 6-1, 6-2, in the boys' 14-under final and sister Sally Mae Siso routed Cheska Tabotabo, 6-1, 6-2, for the girls' title at the close of the 2007 Milo Junior Tennis Cup and Regional Workshop at the Casino Español Tennis Club Saturday.

Sally Mae scored a double victory with a 6-4, 6-4 win over elder sister Sallydine Siso in the girls' 16-under finals to underscore the domination of the Siso siblings in the tournament sanctioned by the Philippine Tennis Association Region 7 under vice president John Pages.

Kezia Jabines, representing Baybay, Leyte, edged Hannah Grace Espinosa, 1-6, 6-4, 10-3, for the girls' 12-under championship.

The age-group competitions, organized by CTW, celebrate the 20th year of Milo's involvement in junior tennis.

Bernardine started the tournament with a 6-2, 6-1 upset victory over the favored June Montalbo to gain the quarterfinals in the first weekend.

"That win (over Montalbo) gave me courage in my next matches," he said. "Jacob is a fighter but, surprisingly, he could not play with as much power as before."

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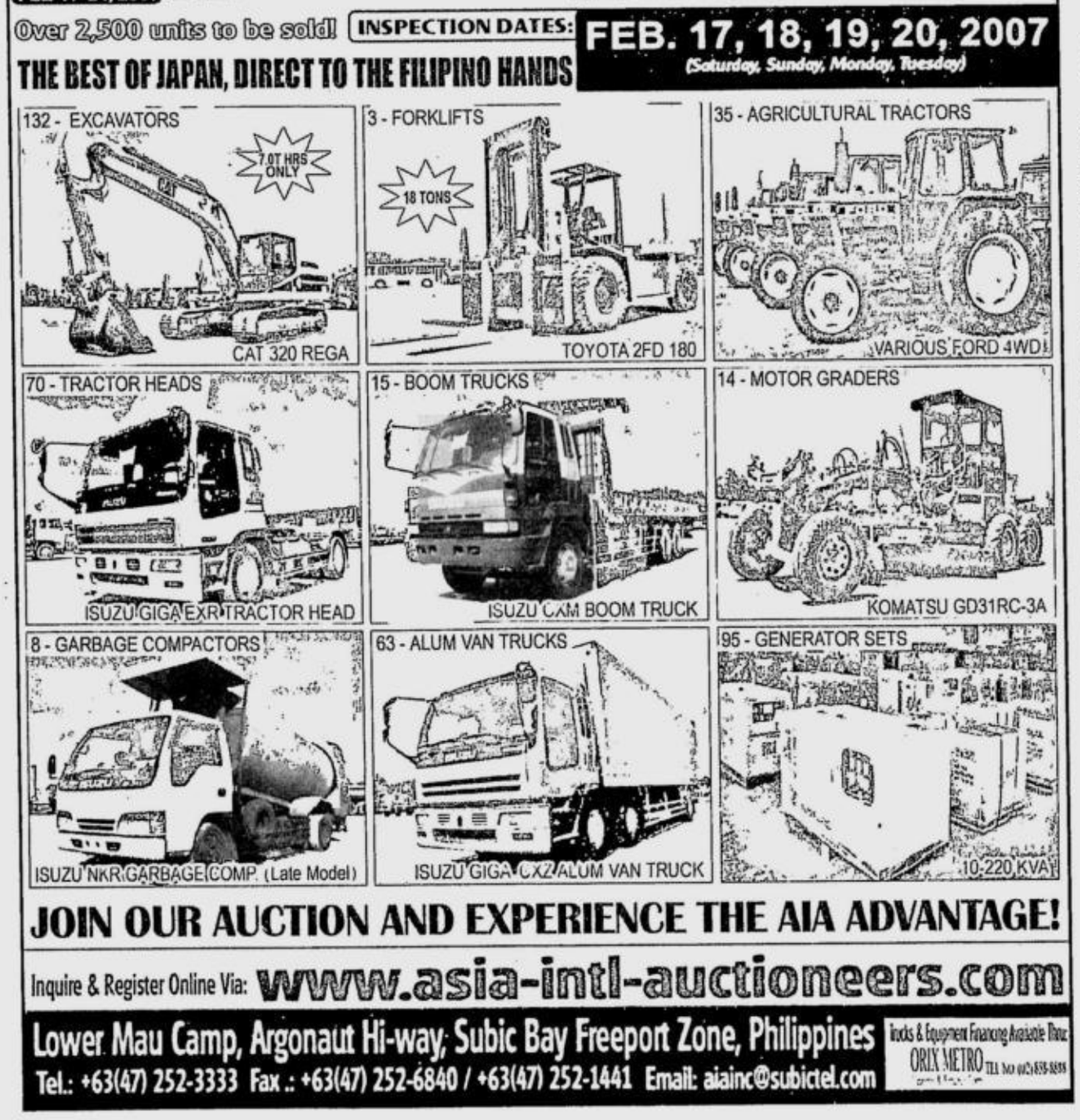

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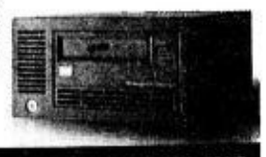

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Anti-money laundering coverage to be expanded

AMLC wants lawyers, accountants to be liable too

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES' ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING COUNcil has initiated new measures to oblige lawyers, accountants and other "gatekeepers" of financial deals to play a greater role in the global crusade against dirty money and terrorist financing.

In an interview, AMLC executive director Vicente Aquino said the local watchdog had written the Supreme Court to issue a circular requiring the members of the Philippine bar to comply with the AMLC requirements on suspicious and covered transactions.

He added that the AMLC had similarly written to the Professional Regulatory Commission to oblige certified public accountants to do the same as part of their professional practice.

"We are practically asking for the expansion of the covered institutions so as to include the gatekeepers," Aquino said, noting the proposal was in line with recent initiatives being pushed by the Paris-based Financial Action Task Force (FATF) against money laundering.

Money laundering is a crime wherein the proceeds of an unlawful activity are used in financial transactions to make them appear to have originated from legitimate sources.

"Evidently, the FATF has determined that criminals and organized crime groups use lawyers, accountants, casinos, real estate brokers and precious metal dealers in the laundering of their ill-gotten or criminal proceeds," Aquino said.

He said majority of the jurisdictions across the globe were already addressing this concern on gatekeepers and many were already in compliance.

"So that's why we don't want to be a step behind," Aquino said, noting that the AMLC would like the precautionary measures on gatekeepers in place within this year.

Once covered, the gatekeepers will be required to comply with the same reporting, record-keeping and know-your-customer (KYC) requirements that other covered institutions like banks and other financial institutions were obliged to do.

Philippine law against dirty money allows the government to look into any transaction—whether a single, series or combination—worth at least P500,000, stricter than the previous threshold of P4 million. This gave authorities more leeway to probe suspicious cash deposits and investments, or defined as those "without any credible purpose or origin, underlying trade obligation or contract."

In the past, authorities had to seek a court order before they are given access to suspicious bank accounts in view of the bank secrecy law.

Asked whether this expansion of coverage would need another amend-

ANTI-MONEY/ B4

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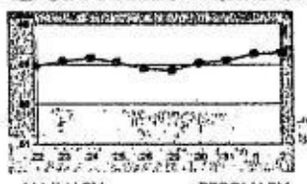

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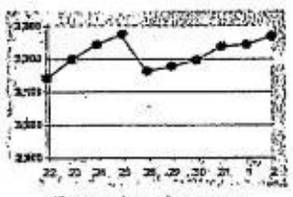

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Canadian firm keen on investing in Nonoc mine

By Christine A. Gaylican

CANADA'S CHEMICAL VAPOR METAL Refinery Co. (CVMR) has expressed serious interest to be a major investor in the reopening of the Nonoc nickel mine owned by Philnico Industrial Corp. in Surigao province.

This was confirmed by Philnico president Evaristo Narvaez Jr. in a message sent to the INQUIRER.

Narvaez said a local affiliate, CVMR Resources (Philippines) Inc., was now conducting a due diligence on Nonoc's mineral property.

Since Philnico ended talks with China's Jinchuan Nonferrous Metals Corp., the mining company has started negotiating with four other companies from China, Russia and Japan whom Narvaez said "will be given equal opportunities to bid for the project."

In an earlier assessment, Nonoc nickel mines may require $1 billion for rehabilitation. Located on Nonoc Island off Surigao City, the nickel mine is touted to hold one of the biggest nickel and cobalt resources in Southeast Asia.

The Nonoc mine, which has about 60 million metric tons in nickel reserves, halted operations in 1982 due to high energy costs.

CVMR is keen to invest $3 billion in a nickel refinery in the Philippines, a ranking official of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau said in another interview last week.

In Asia, CVMR also owns a nickel refinery in China's northeastern province of Jilin and it appears that the company is looking for raw material, the nickel ore to feed its mineral processing plant, the official noted.

CVMR is scouting for a possible site location and its hunt has taken the company to the provinces of Palawan, Zambales and Surigao, said the official, who declined to be named, adding that it was negotiating supply contracts with major nickel miners in the country.

The Philippine government has expressed optimism that the domestic minerals sector is poised for a boom with planned investment by world players such as Anglo-American Plc. and Phelps Dodge Corp. in local projects.

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Scanner Shopping Tips

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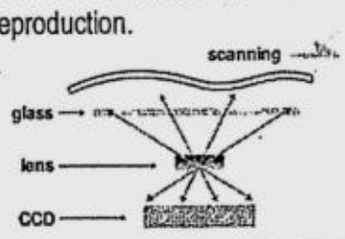
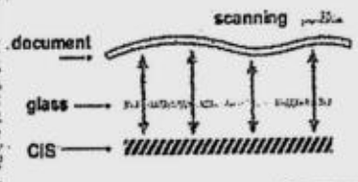
Use of CCD Technology

Advanced CCD technology enables a scanner to create sharp images from documents that are uneven, bent or creased. A high-quality CCD imaging sensor also delivers vibrant color reproduction.



Images turn out clear regardless of the scanning distances from the paper. A



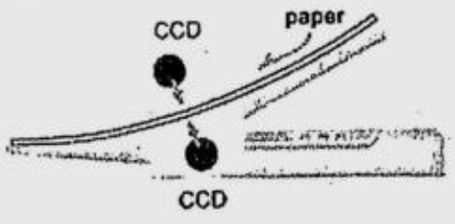
Images turn out blurred when the scanning distance differ. A

Straight Paper Path

Eliminate paper jams and crumpled or torn documents with a scanner that allows the paper to travel in a straight line. A straight paper path allows the scanner to handle more types of documents, from thin tracing paper to thick cardboard. A U-shaped paper path is a no-no!

Simultaneous Duplex Scanning

Save time and enhance efficiency with a scanner that captures both sides of a document in a single pass. This also simplifies the way the documents are handled and reduces the possibility of getting the pages arranged in the wrong order.



Automatic Document Feeder

An Automatic Document Feeder (ADF) will save you from countless hours of tediously hand-feeding documents into the scanner and allows you to scan large volumes of documents at high speed for increased productivity.

Simple Maintenance and Durability

Make sure that the scanner you buy is very durable and easy to maintain, with consumable parts that can be easily replaced by the users themselves.

Speed, Capacity and Extras

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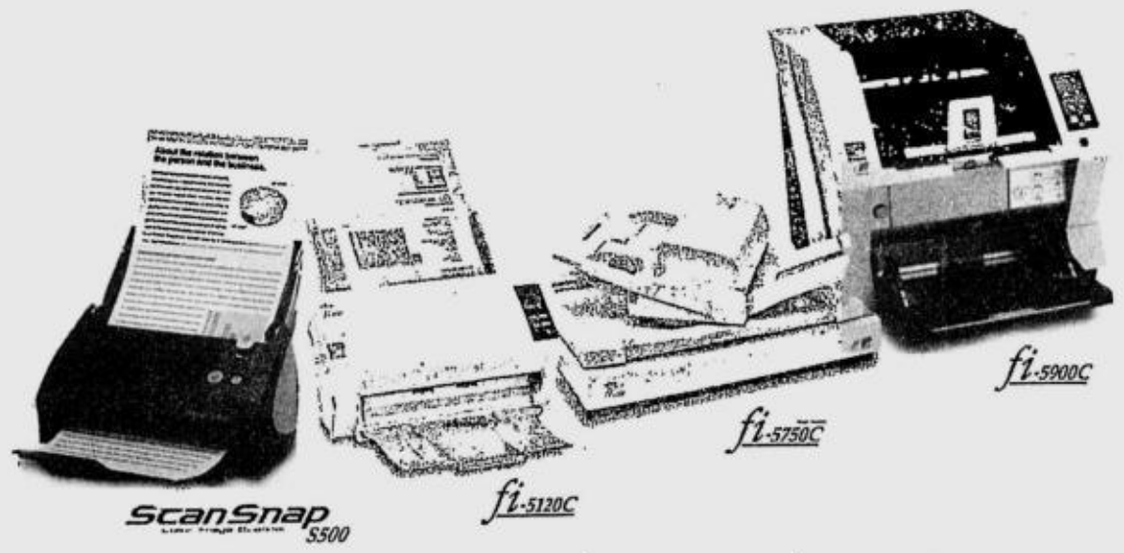

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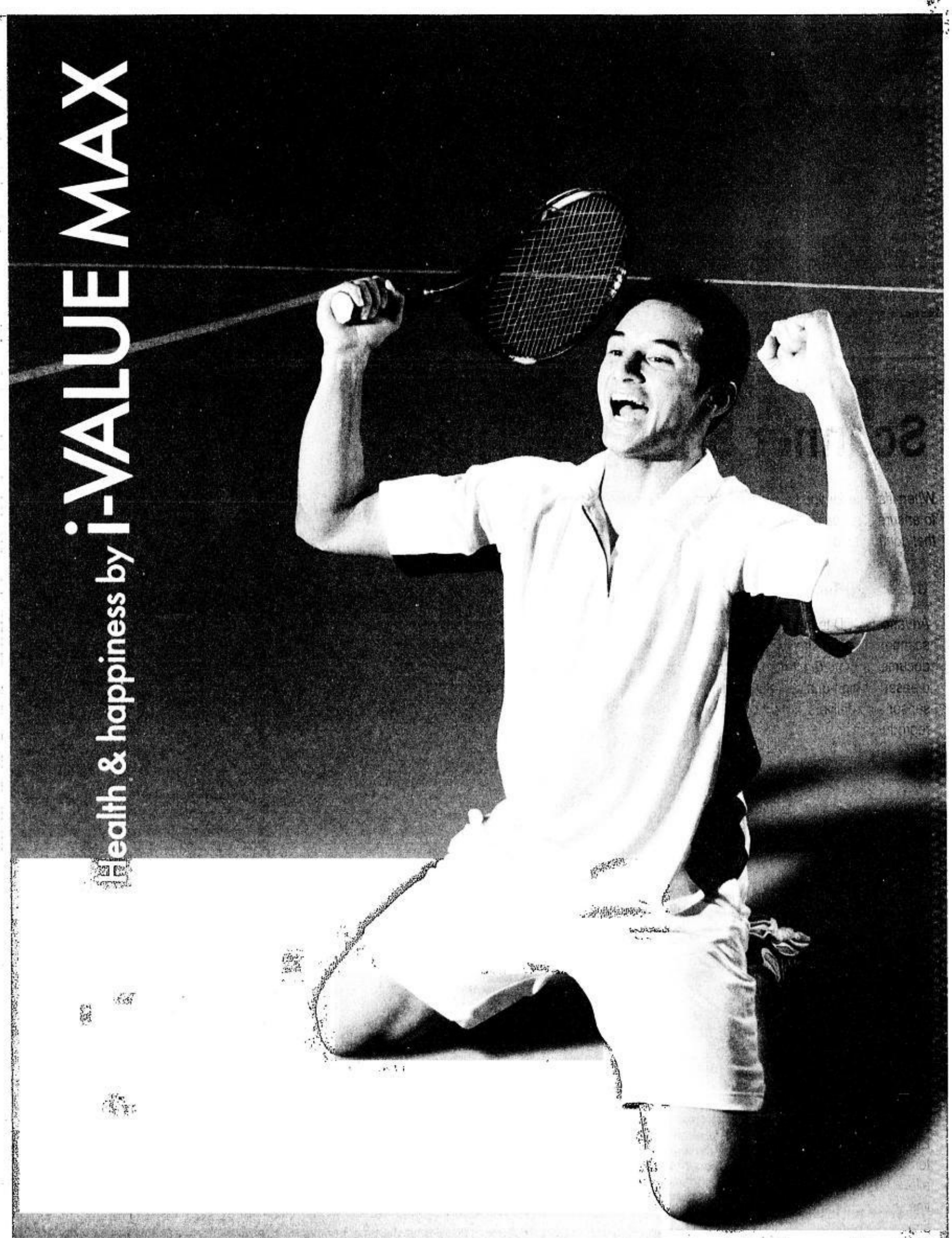

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RP to push air talks with 11 countries this year

PAL wants Canada, Cebu Pacific eyes more Korea flights

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE PHILIPPINES HAS INITIATED air talks with Macau, Palau, South Korea, Canada, Russia, Oman and Libya to forge reciprocal air travel agreements, according to an official of the Civil Aeronautics Board (CAB).

CAB deputy executive director Porvenir P. Porciuncula said the negotiations would be intensified within the year.

The official said Russian negotiators were expected to be available for discussions within February or March and talks with the other countries would be lined up soon.

The government particularly wants to secure flight frequencies to Oman, Libya and areas in the Federated States of Micronesia such as Palau because of the large number of Filipinos there, he added.

As for Canada and South Korea, Porciuncula said the talks were initiated at the request of local carriers.

Flag carrier Philippine Airlines wants to fly to Canada and has also signified intentions to fly to Cambodia while Cebu Pacific wants to increase frequencies to South Korea up to 20 times weekly, Porciuncula said.

Discussions with Macau, meanwhile, are being initiated following the Macau Civil Aviation Authority's rejection of Asian Spirit's request to serve the destination with charter flights from Clark and Davao.

The rejection reignited air liberalization issues concerning reciprocity, Porciuncula said.

"This raised the issue of reciprocity in EO 500 because we (CAB) have given permission to Tiger Airways to fly between Macau and Clark. Asian Spirit has now requested that we start air talks with Macau," Porciuncula said, adding that other airlines shared the same sentiment that there should be reciprocity on permits.

He added that the talks were expected to progress within the year but there was no definite timetable yet because the availability of officials from all sides was still being worked out.

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The cost of tax compliance

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Cielito F. Habito

I OFTEN LAMENT AN INHERENT INJUSTICE in our revenue system. Whenever the government needs to raise additional revenues, our tendency is to "penalize" those who already pay taxes faithfully. This is because the approach is usually to impose new taxes, or increase existing ones. Meanwhile, those who have been evading taxes all along largely continue to do so.

On top of that, we make it harder than necessary for good taxpayers to fulfill their duties as a citizen. We burden them with cumbersome forms and documentary requirements, and we put them to such inconvenience when filing their returns and pay their taxes. Alas, in our society, it's often the good and honest who end up the losers, and this is yet another context in which this injustice plays out. In other words, when it comes to taxes, it can be too costly to be compliant.

Few filers

This probably has significant revenue implications as well. How much potential tax revenues does the government lose because taxpayers find it too much of a hassle to pay their taxes? Of the approximately P240 billion estimated by the Department of Finance to be lost annually to tax evasion, a significant part is likely because people simply decided that it wasn't worth the effort to be filing a tax return. This can apply to income taxes, VAT or other forms of taxes for which filing of a tax declaration or return is necessary. Not surprisingly, only about 2 million income tax returns (ITRs) are filed annually with the BIR, whereas there are about 33 million employed workers in our economy.

To be sure, the bulk of tax evasion is due to people who are determined to conceal their true tax liability from the government to begin with. But I'm pretty sure that a good number of those who would otherwise want to be good taxpayers end up not being so because it's just too difficult to follow the rules.

Hoops and ladders

What are the things that make it hard to be a good taxpayer? For one thing, an income tax filer often has to go out of his/her way to file an ITR. To their credit, BIR has now made it much easier for fixed income earners whose taxes are withheld by their employers, through the substituted filing system where the withholding tax certification can substitute for the ITR. But those with mixed incomes still need to file an ITR, and can only do it within their designated revenue district, which may not always be the most convenient place for them to do so.

BIR tries to make it easier by setting up filing counters in accessible places like shopping malls. But province-based taxpayers like me need to troop to the nearest BIR office, the municipal treasurer's office, or an authorized agent bank (AAB). But not all municipal treasurers accept ITRs (mine doesn't, so I still travel some 12 kilometers to the nearest revenue district office in the next town, to file mine). And the AABs don't make it easy either, often putting hoops and ladders in the way of income tax filers, by restricting who can file and pay taxes with them, and when they can do it.

Transaction costs

The latter turns out to be a major issue in itself. Banks find it a burden to have to service income tax filers, and the AABs have been engaged in a running argument with the BIR all these years. The banks feel that it is too costly for them to service taxpayers; I've heard an estimate putting it at P120 (assuming 5 minutes servicing time) per taxpayer. This, they say, is barely recovered through the "float" they get with the taxpayers' money (i.e. the earnings that could be made from holding the cash prior to remittance to BIR). And for ITR filers who pay little or no cash on top of the tax already withheld by their employers, servicing them is a losing proposition.

The banks also complain of the stiff penalties imposed on them in the event of inevitable occasional errors in accounting and documentation, adding further to the cost of being an AAB. To mitigate some of these problems, the banks have been asking that they be allowed to drastically simplify the forms needed for the bank tax payments, accept tax payments from taxpayers from outside their revenue district, and to go easy on the penalties. These issues remain unresolved, we are told.

More outlets

A solution could be to permit banks to collect an appropriate service fee when they service an income tax filer. Surely, many taxpayers would not mind paying a little extra for the convenience of filing and paying at their nearest bank. This is the same principle with "bayad centers" that have begun to proliferate, where people can pay their various utility and commercial bills at convenient locations, for a minimal service fee. Perhaps the BIR can widen the option for taxpayers by looking to such additional payment outlets as well. In any case, we owe it to our faithful taxpayers to make it as easy as possible to fulfill a basic duty of citizenship.

The public is invited to the next Ateneo Eagle Watch Economic and Political Briefing to be held on Feb. 21 at the Ateneo Rockwell Campus. For details and reservations, contact Joannie Tongol at 929-7035 (e-mail joannietongol@gmail.com).

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Anti-money laundering coverage to be expanded

From page B1

ment of the Anti-Money Laundering Law, Aquino said: "We don't have to go back to Congress by way of legislation because this will be a difficult process. So if we could do it by regulation, we'll do it."

"We want to be in compliance before we are again evaluated by the Asia Pacific Group on money laundering. We hope it will be in place within the year. We're also awaiting the enactment of the anti-terrirorism law, which will be of great help to AMLC and other law enforcement government agencies," Aquino said.

Countries in the Asia-Pacific are currently under pressure from international watchdogs to map out tighter measures to ensure that the informal remittance system, wire transfers, cash couriers and even nongovernment organizations would not be "abused" or "misused" in financing terrorism.

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PNOC-EC eyes secondary offering

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC EXPLORATION CORP. (PNOC-EC), a government-owned or controlled corporation listed on the exchange, wants to increase public ownership of the company to as much as 40 percent within the year.

Pedro Aquino Jr., officer in charge of parent firm Philippine National Oil Co., said only 1.7 percent of PNOC-EC was currently held by the public.

The PNOC-EC board, he said, was planning to hold a secondary offering after the May elections to boost this percentage to as high as 40 percent.

Energy Secretary Raphael Lotilla confirmed this in a separate interview, saying the matter was still under study and that the PNOC-EC board should come up with something concrete soon.

"The secondary offering is still being studied. If it's net economic benefit to PNOC-EC and to the country is positive, (then it can be pursued)," he told reporters.

He said the secondary offering could be separate from the earlier formulated privatization strategy of PNOC-EC, involving the sale of 49 percent of the state firm's 10-percent stake in the Malampaya Deep Water Gas-to-Power project.

"We'll continue to consider ways to raise funds to lessen dependence on government guarantees and loans," he said. "PNOC-EC's financial requirements will depend on what projects it will pursue. It will be good if it can be self-sufficient."

Aquino said the prospects of PNOC-EC raising more funds, whether through straight privatization or via a secondary offering, were good, considering the lucrative development projects it was involved in.

"For example, North Calamian is already a sure ball because that's in the hydrocarbon belt. The chances of finding oil and gas in that area are very high," he said.

He said PNOC-EC should have enough cash to pursue exploration and development activities even without government support.

Also, the PNOC-EC board has to decide whether to retain ING as its financial adviser for the possible secondary offering.

Metrobank '06 net income seen up 27.7%

By Doris C. Dumlao

METROPOLITAN BANK & TRUST CO. REmained the country's largest bank as of end-2006, with its consolidated assets rising by 9.4 percent to P641.5 billion, the bank's unaudited report showed.

Its closest rival, the Ayalas' Bank of the Philippine Islands, ended the year with unaudited total resources of P582 billion, 10 percent higher than the resources posted a year ago.

Metrobank also disclosed that its unaudited net income for the parent bank, alone, increased by 27.7 percent to P5.5 billion compared from P4.3 billion in 2005. The bank owns the second largest thrift bank in the country, Philippine Savings Bank, as well as investment house First Metro Investment Corp.

For the same period, BPI posted a consolidated net profit of P9 billion, 8 percent higher than a year ago.

"The economy moved positively last year providing new business opportunities for us. We are happy that the results of our initiatives have started to kick in. We deliberately focused on attracting new businesses especially in deposits, increasing our corporate lending business, and strengthening our banking operations," Metrobank president Arthur Ty said in a statement.

Metrobank's unaudited deposits increased by 16 percent to P492 billion in 2006 from P424.3 billion in 2005. Consolidated net loans for 2006 were at P276 billion.

"We also explored new approaches to increase our remittance volume through new product offerings and expanding our partnerships abroad," Ty explained.

Metrobank's total capital accounts increased to P60.7 billion from P49.5 billion in 2005. Capital stock was at P36.1 billion with surplus of P14.6 billion for 2006.

The bank concluded two major capital raising initiatives last year to meet new regulatory requirements, particularly the Basel 2 capital adequacy framework.

In the meantime, its non-performing loans decreased to P15.7 billion, or 5.2 percent of the bank's total loan portfolio.

"The expansion of our business was complemented by the strengthening of our balance sheet through the sale of almost P10 billion in non-performing assets," Ty said. "This allowed the bank to take in new opportunities more aggressively."

"We are gaining momentum in our growth strategy," said Ty. "The challenge for us now is how fast we can build on our gains and pick up the pace of change."

BPI, which previously acquired Prudential Bank, posted a 15 percent return on average capital of P60 billion and 14.4 percent return on adjusted average equity (including net upward adjustment for unrealized gains in available for sale securities) in 2006. Return on assets was 1.7 percent.

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Investment Funds	Net Asset Value Per Unit (NAVPU) as of 1/24/07	as of 1/31/07	One-Year Return 1/31/06 to 1/31/07
Philamlife Equity Fund	1.7149	1.7359	46.75%
Philamlife Fixed Income Fund	1.3543	1.3447	12.71%
Philamlife Dollar Bond Fund	1.3393	1.3260	16.33%
Philamlife Global Bond Fund	1.1879	1.1781	10.55%

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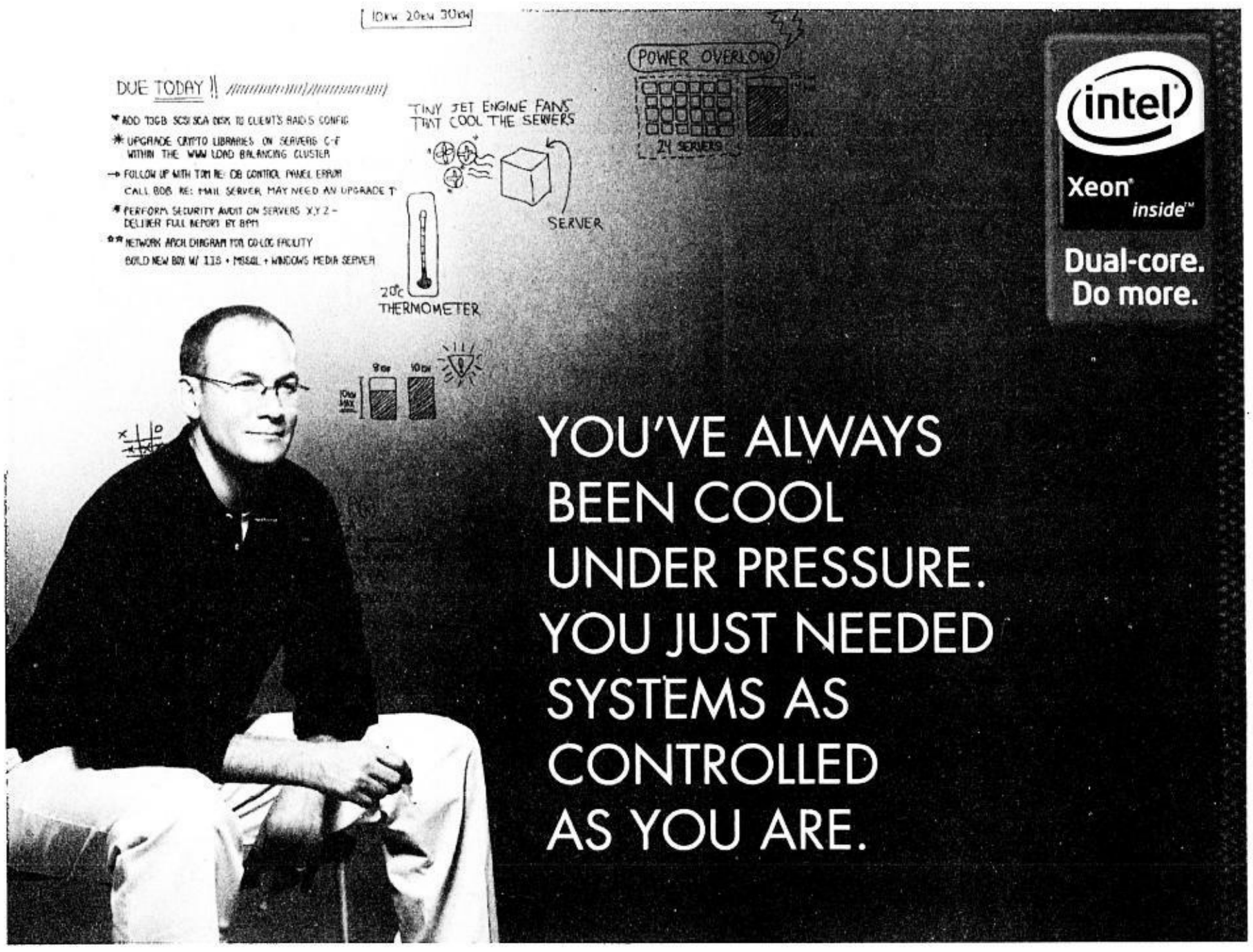

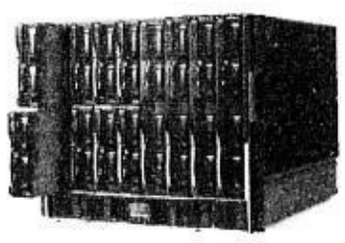

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CLUB	SHARES AVAILABLE SELLER	BUYER
Alabang Country Club A/B*	1,100,000/1,300,000*	1,050,000
Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	300,000/Pls. Call*/Pls Call**
Baguio Country Club	-	500,000
Camp John Hay	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
La Mesa Eco Park	-	420,000
Canyon Woods	100,000	-
Capitol Hills	50,000	-
Cebu Country Club	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Celebrity Sports	Pls Call	80,000
Club Filipino	90,000	-
Edgeridge A/B*/C**	170,000/Pls. Call*/Pls. Call**	200,000*
Eastridge A/B*	Pls Call	-
Evercrest	65,000	-
Fairways & Bluewater	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Forest Hills A/B*/C**	90,000/Pls. Call*	120,000*
Loyola Golf	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Manila Golf Corporate	Pls. Call	12,600,000
Manila Golf Individual	Pls Call	11,600,000
Manila Polo	2,750,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods A/B*	300,000/Pls. Call*	-
Makati Sports Club A	200,000	-
Manila Yacht Club Ind.	260,000	-
Metropolitan Club A/B*	160,000	-
Mimosa Ind./C2*/C3**	Pls. Call	Pls. Call/550,000**
Mt. Malarayat A	180,000	-
Orchard A/B*/C**	180,000/Pls. Call/350,000**	150,000
Punta Fuego	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Quezon City Sports Club	Pls. Call	Pls. Call
Riviera Golf A/B*/C**	80,000/170,000*/250,000**	Pls Call*
Rockwell Leisure Club	Pls Call	Pls. Call
Royale Tagaytay CC	65,000	-
Sherwood A/B*/C**	70,000/150,000**	100,000*
Splendido Taal	200,000	Pls. Call
Sta. Elena Golf A/B*	-	1,500,000
Subic Golf	100,000	-
Summit Point A	300,000	-
The Palms Country Club	300,000	330,000
Country Club at Tagaytay Highlands	320,000	-
Tagaytay Highlands	650,000	620,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Pls. Call	620,000
The Country Club	2,000,000	-
Tower Club A/B*	150,000/180,000*	-
Valley Golf	200,000	-
Valle Verde Ind.	Pls. Call	-
Wack Wack Golf	Pls Call	7,000,000

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Alabang Country Club "B" (Foreigner)	1,200,000	1,100,000
Arrieta Cove Beach and Nature Club	Please Call	-
Baguio Country Club	Please Call	540,000
Canlubang Golf Club "A"	40,000	-
Canlubang Golf Club "B"	60,000	50,000
Camp John Hay	350,000	300,000
Cantutang	470,000	420,000
Capitol Hills	40,000	-
Cebu Country Club	1,600,000	1,400,000
Celebrity Sports Club	120,000	90,000
Club Filipino	100,000	90,000
Edgeridge "A"/"B"/"C"	Please Call	-
Forest Hills "A"	90,000	75,000
Forest Hills "B"	150,000	-
Forest Hills "C"	200,000	-
Loyola Golf "A"	350,000	250,000
Makati Sports Club "A"	190,000	160,000
Makati Sports Club "B"	200,000	-
Manila Golf (Corporate)	-	12,500,000
Manila Golf (Individual)	-	11,600,000
Manila Polo	2,850,000	2,700,000
Manila Southwoods "A"	300,000	-
Manila Southwoods "B"	750,000	650,000
Manila Yacht Club	250,000	-
Mimosa (Individual)	230,000	200,000
Mimosa (Corporate)	600,000	550,000
Mt. Malarayat Gold "A"	180,000	-
Mt. Malarayat Gold "C"	350,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "A"	180,000	150,000
Orchard Golf Club "B"	300,000	-
Orchard Golf Club "C"	370,000	330,000
Quezon City Sports Club	150,000	140,000
Spa & Lodge	580,000	500,000
Sta. Elena "A"	-	1,300,000
Sta. Elena "B"	2,140,000	1,800,000
Summit Point "A"	280,000	-
Tagaytay Country Club	320,000	280,000
Tagaytay Highlands	-	630,000
Tagaytay Midlands	Please Call	620,000
Valle Verde (Individual)	100,000	-
Valley Golf	200,000	180,000
Wack-Wack Golf Club	-	7,000,000

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Foreign brokers lord over local bourse

By Daxim L. Lucas

FOREIGN-OWNED AND -AFFILIATED STOCK-brokers continued to lord it over the local bourse, with seven of them cornering the bulk of stock market transactions in 2006.

Latest data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) show that these seven firms accounted for a combined 54.62 percent of the total value turnover last year.

The league table was led by Deutsche Regis Partners Inc., which was responsible for 12.24 percent of all stock trades during the year.

The firm—formerly the local unit of Deutsche Morgan Grenfell—is technically classified by the bourse as a local stockbroker, but handles mainly foreign trades from Deutsche Bank's clients abroad.

Following in the broker rankings are UBS Securities Phils. Inc., which cornered 11.56 percent of transactions, and CLSA Philippines Inc. with 9.17 percent.

Ranked fourth was JP Morgan Securities Phils. Inc. with 8.08 percent of total value traded in 2006, followed by Macquarie Securities (Phils.) Inc. with 6.61 percent of trades.

At sixth place, ATR-Kim Eng Securities Inc. came in as the strongest local stockbroker, cornering 6.41 percent of value turnover.

The firm has performed strongly in recent years by virtue of its strong distribution network among local investors, making it the favorite broker to handle the domestic portion of stock offerings.

It was followed by Philippine Equity Partners Inc. (PEP), which handled 3.64 percent of total turnover for the year.

PEP is the successor to the local unit Merrill Lynch when the latter sold its stake to Filipino partners in the wake of the 1997 East Asian financial crisis. The firm, however, continues to service mainly foreign accounts.

ABN Amro Asia Securities (Phils.) Inc. came in at eighth place with a 3.62-percent share of the action.

Locally-owned Wealth Securities Inc. and Asiasec Equities Inc. rounded out the top 10, having handled 3.14 percent and 2.78 percent of total 2006 turnover, respectively.

Taken together, the 10 largest stockbrokers handled 67.25 percent or over two-thirds of all transactions on the PSE—a trend that has held true for most of the periods before or after the 1997 crisis, and attesting to the fact that foreign funds continue to be the main drivers of the local bourse.

Other firms that landed in the PSE's top 20 rankings for 2006 include Abacus Securities Corp., BPI Securities Corp., SB Equities Inc., BDO Securities Corp., AB Capital Securities Inc., The First Resources Management and Securities Corp., PCIB Securities Inc., DBP-Daiwa Securities SMDB Phils. Inc., Angping & Associates Sec. Inc. and BA Securities Inc.

According to the PSE, P1.145 trillion worth of shares changed hands in 2006.

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SELLING		BUYING	
ALABANG A	1.1M	ALABANG B	1.070M
CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	500K	BAGUIO COUNTRY CLUB	550K
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	100K	CANLUBANG GOLF CLUB	450K
EAGLERIDGE B	260K	CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	PLS. CALL
EAGLERIDGE C	350K	CLUB FILIPINO	90K
MAKATI SPORTS CLUB	180K	FOREST HILLS C	190K
MANILA POLO CLUB	2.7M	MANILA GOLF CORP.	12.6M
MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	PLS. CALL	MANILA GOLF IND.	11.5M
METROCLUB A	150K	MANILA POLO CLUB	2.6M
MIMOSA C-3	600K	MANILA SOUTHWOODS B	650K
MIMOSA C-1	230K	MIMOSA C3	550K
MT. MALARAYAT A	200K	MIMOSA IND.	200K
MT. MALARAYAT C	380K	ORCHARD C	300K
ORCHARD A	170K	SPA & LODGE	450K
QUEZON CITY SPORTS	150K	STA. ELENA A	PLS. CALL
RIVIERA GOLF B	150K	STA. ELENA B	PLS. CALL
SPLENDIDO	200K	TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS GOLF	630K
STA. ELENA A	PLS. CALL	TOWER CLUB C	PLS. CALL
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	650K	VALLE VERDE	90K
THE PALMS	400K	VALLEY GOLF	200K
VALLE VERDE CORP.	300K	WACK WACK	7.5M

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Index may test 3,300 barrier

INVESTORS MAY TRY to push local stock prices toward an important psychological barrier this week, tempered by some profit taking from meager gains in the previous week.

In a research note to clients, stockbroker AB Capital Securities Inc. said buyers should expect the uptrend in the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) to continue, but warned that it could encounter "some resistance" at the 3,300 level.

The PSEi ended last week at 3,269.18 points, a 3.3-percent increase over the previous week's close of 3,162.82 points.

Value turnover remained healthy, despite the 113-point drop two weeks ago.

AB Capital counseled its clients to focus on second-tier firms which have so far lagged the blue chips in price performance.

Attention will go to property developer Filinvest Land Inc., which will list more shares on the exchange on Tuesday as part of its expansion program.

Continuing inflows of funds from abroad—fleeing the low interest rate regime of US dollar-denominated securities—are expected to propel the local index higher, adding to the recovery momentum.

Low interest rates in local fixed-income investments are also forcing investors to look at the stock market as an alternative.

"The high turnover shows that many investors are rushing in to build positions in the wake of recent strong gains," AB Capital said, adding that earnings results from last year would also add to the bullish mood.

"Funds are coming into the market as investors are anxious to get a better return on their savings than is available on money market investments," the firm said. "Investors are in an upbeat mood about the stream of upcoming 2006 corporate earnings announcements."

More importantly, many local firms are expected to upgrade their earnings projections for this year on the back of the prevailing positive economic environment of low interest rates and a stronger peso.

On the technical side, however, Abacus Securities Corp. warned investors to be cautious about the coming days.

"Trend lines in the daily chart are getting steeper and steeper," its technical analyst Lawrence Gonzaga said.

He pegged the PSEi's resistance at 3,292 points and immediate support at 3,247 points.

Daxim L. Lucas

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Feb. 2, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7	7	7	7	4,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	53.5	55	53.5	55	2,763,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	72.5	73	72	72.5	1,204,100
China Banking Corp.	750	765	750	750	36,820
Chinatrust Comm. Bank	29	30	29	30	7,500
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.5	8,710,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	93	95.5	93	95	267,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	61.5	62.5	61	62.5	12,241,900
Philippine National Bank	48	48	46.5	46.5	65,500
Phil. Savings Bank	50	52	50	52	192,700
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	39.5	40.5	39	40	363,200
Security Bank Corp.	77	78	77	77.5	162,000
Union Bank of the Phil.	60	61	60	61	39,100
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	2.9	3.6	2.9	3.5	165,000
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.7	0.68	0.69	380,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	4.9	5.1	4.9	5	975,000
First Metro Invest. Corp	32	32	32	32	20,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1640	1660	1640	1650	5,120
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.62	1.64	1.62	1.62	185,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	460	485	455	480	9,350
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2080	2100	2080	2100	2,670
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.62	1.6	1.62	521,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	4.95	5.4	4.95	5.3	69,115,000
First Gen Corp.	59	59	58	59	595,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp	77	77	75.5	76	768,400
Manila Electric Co. A	70	70.5	70	70.5	75,300
Manila Electric Co. B	70	71	70	70.5	4,661,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.2	9.4	9.2	9.3	7,515,000
Petron Corp.	4.45	4.7	4.45	4.6	24,861,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	129,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.8	93,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	23.25	26.5	23.25	25	578,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	42.5	44.5	42.5	44.5	1,945,200
RFM Corp.	1.38	1.44	1.38	1.44	1,770,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	104,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.41	0.41	160,000
San Miguel Corp. A	63	64	63	64	132,900
San Miguel Corp. B	75	76	75	76	151,100
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.06	2.06	2.02	2.06	381,000
Universal Robina Corp	18.5	18.5	18	18.25	4,617,100
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.3	1.4	1.28	1.4	81,745,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.6	4.9	4.6	4.75	4,055,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8	7.9	8	7,588,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.1	5.3	5.1	5.3	1,797,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	4,480,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.28	0.29	31,030,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	92,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	18,000,000
Ayala Corp.	635	655	635	655	1,006,820
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.69	0.7	0.69	0.69	440,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.2	12,457,000
Alliance Global Group Inc	8.8	10.25	8.8	8.9	81,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.0725	0.075	0.0725	0.075	33,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.2	3.25	3.2	3.25	574,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	5,780,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	25,600,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.34	1.34	1.26	1.28	5,671,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.62	1.62	25,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	285,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10	10	10	10	13,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.1	3.15	3.05	3.05	24,972,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.7	7.4	7.6	4,022,000
Fil-Estate Corp.	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.8	200,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.4	3,141,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	150,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.2	3.45	3.2	3.3	1,178,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12.25	12.25	12	12	2,323,600
Keppel Holdings B	1.8	1.8	1.78	1.78	50,000
Medco Holdings	0.35	0.41	0.35	0.39	7,970,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.37	0.37	220,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.1	4.85	4.9	1,297,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2	2	1.92	2	2,190,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	3,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	1,000,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.73	0.73	190,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.165	0.155	0.16	11,090,000
SM Investments Corp.	370	395	370	392.5	488,660
South China Resources Inc	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	68,000
Vivant Corp.	1.16	1.24	1.16	1.2	14,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.135	0.135	0.135	0.135	550,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	17.5	17.75	17	17.25	12,140,400
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.49	0.49	0.46	0.46	270,000
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.22	5,054,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.44	1.46	41,513,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	1,370,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.6	1,508,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.86	1.86	195,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.32	3,550,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.77	0.77	0.75	0.76	58,060,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.68	1.68	1.68	1.68	185,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.065	0.065	0.0625	0.065	7,300,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.2	530,000
Gotesco Land Inc. B	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	240,000
Interport Res.	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	489,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0095	0.011	0.0095	0.01	429,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	19,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.54	0.54	0.52	0.52	2,270,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.85	0.86	0.84	0.84	8,640,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.85	2.85	2.7	2.8	57,476,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.8	5.2	4.8	5.1	250,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	3,500,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.04	2.04	2.02	2.02	17,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	16.5	18	16.5	17.75	12,708,400
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.66	0.66	0.64	0.64	15,320,000
SM Development Corp.	3.65	3.9	3.65	3.85	5,820,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.5	13	12.25	12.5	8,056,200
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.61	0.62	0.61	0.62	210,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	4,100,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp	22.75	23.25	22.75	23.25	188,400
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc	1.92	1.94	1.92	1.94	10,782,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1420	1420	1410	1410	30,800
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.8	7,148,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2605	2605	2570	2575	116,240
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.32	0.33	14,400,000
Diversified Fin. Network	2.55	2.55	2.5	2.5	37,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.022	0.021	0.021	8,000,000
Ionics Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.85	1,207,000
IPVG Corp.	3.75	3.85	3.75	3.85	25,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	8,200,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.0575	8,300,000
Music Semiconductors Corp	1.3	1.3	1.28	1.28	142,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.3	2.34	2.28	2.3	257,000
Philweb Corp.	0.036	0.036	0.035	0.036	128,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	14,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24	24	24	24	254,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.99	0.99	0.96	0.99	710,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	20,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.04	2.06	4,548,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	420,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.64	0.66	0.64	0.65	3,510,000
EDUCATION					
Ipeople Inc.	3.1	3.25	3.1	3.2	253,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Easycall Phils. Inc.-Com	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3,000
Macroasia Corp.	2.06	2.06	2.04	2.04	732,000
Paxys Inc.	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	658,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.6	5.7	5.5	5.5	1,840,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.8	5.8	5.5	5.6	315,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	55,000,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.3	9.4	9.3	9.4	1,378,000
Benguet Corp. A	12.5	13	12	12.5	567,300
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.8	0.84	0.8	0.84	64,970,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	8,290,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	5,310,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.025	0.025	0.024	0.025	291,800,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.028	0.027	0.028	367,900,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	78,100,000
Philex Mining Corp.	3.95	4.15	3.95	4.05	15,907,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	18.5	18.75	18.5	18.5	173,700
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.77	0.77	0.76	0.76	220,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.56	1.56	1.48	1.5	4,219,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,080,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	8,100,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	13,400,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	505,500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.5	10.5	10.25	10.25	140,600

CURRENCIES

February 4, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.767695	1.000000	48.7810
Japan	Yen	0.006358	0.008282	0.4040
United Kingdom	Pound	1.510517	1.967600	95.9815
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098373	0.128141	6.2508
Switzerland	Franc	0.617466	0.804311	39.2351
Canada	Dollar	0.651362	0.848464	41.3889
Singapore	Dollar	0.500616	0.652103	31.8102
Australia	Dollar	0.594330	0.774174	37.7650
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.036327	2.652520	129.3926
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.204697	0.266638	13.0069
Brunei	Dollar	0.498990	0.649984	31.7069
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000084	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022060	0.028736	1.4018
UAE	Dirham	0.209039	0.272294	13.2828
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.302600	63.5421
Korea	Won	0.000820	0.001068	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.098949	0.128891	6.2874
Argentina	Peso	0.247444	0.322321	15.7231
Brazil	Real	0.364579	0.474901	23.1661
Denmark	Kroner	0.134133	0.174721	8.5231
India	Rupee	0.017444	0.022722	1.1084
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.219341	0.285714	13.9374
Mexico	New Peso	0.069988	0.091166	4.4472
New Zealand	Dollar	0.523167	0.681477	33.2431
South Africa	Rand	0.106698	0.138985	6.7798
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023369	0.030441	1.4849

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 01, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 01, 2007

How to count the vote without automation

QUESTIONS OF POLICIES
Honesto C. General

THE CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONference of the Philippines (CBCP) and the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) are positioning themselves to watch over the conduct of the May elections. The National Movement for Free Elections (Namfrel) is grappling with Comelec for accreditation as the traditional citizens' watchdog. Even the good US of A and the European Union (EU) will closely monitor election fraud and violence, whatever this means.

Well and good. Once and for all, let us have clean, honest and credible election.

First, is vote buying crucial to the results? It is true that, in some places, the queue of panhandlers in front of a candidate's home is longer than the queue of voters at the polling booth. Some 50 years ago, you could buy a voter for P2. Today, the going rate can go as high as P500.

After getting paid at a candidate's home, the same panhandlers line up at the opponent's place. So, a candidate buys votes as a defensive measure. He does it because everybody else is doing it. As a result, most of the vote buying cancels each other out.

What about automation? Isn't information technology the best way to count the votes? Forget automation. There is no way over 200,000 precincts can be connected to a computer grid. And, even if it can, it will never be foolproof. Some whiz kid in high school can inject a virus and wreck the whole system.

So, let us go manual. At the precinct level, the tedious counting of the ballots is well covered by the candidates' own watchers, the PPCRV and/or Namfrel, and the usual hangers-on.

It is when the precincts close and the watchers go home and the ballot boxes are brought and canvassed in the dark recesses of the municipal/city treasurer's office when wholesale cheating (the notorious *dagdag-bawas*) begins.

To avoid *dagdag-bawas*, canvassing the results of the precincts should be done in the open. For example, the precinct where I vote, and about 20 other precincts, are all located in a covered basketball court. After the precincts are done, the results should be canvassed right in the basketball court for all to see. The result of the canvass goes to the city hall for the citywide canvass; the ballot boxes are sent to Comelec.

At City Hall, the citywide canvass should be done in the open for everyone to watch. In Makati, the parking lot in front of City Hall is perfect for this open-air canvass. Even the municipal hall of the smallest town has a courtyard large enough to double as a basketball and volleyball courts.

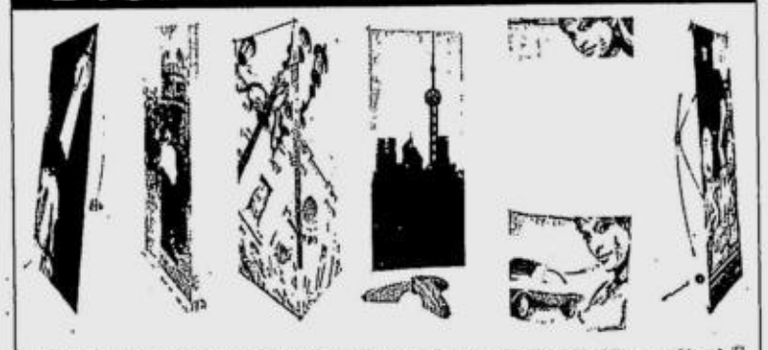
The city/municipal canvass results are sent to the provincial government building, where the province-wide canvass should be done out in the open again for everyone to watch.

The provincial canvass results are finally sent to Comelec for the nationwide canvass that is now done in the open.

Canvassing in the open every step of the way should minimize violence. No one will likely shoot his way into an elective office if everything is out in the open.

Finally, let us not fool ourselves. The Constitution guarantees clean and honest elections. It can never guarantee that the best man will win.

DISPLAY SOLUTIONS



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ANTIPOLO
Text 0921-5094967

BSJ_ANT001 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 400 sqm. (near Bankers Subd)
CAVALIER SUBD.,Sumulong Hi-way
Min. Bid Price: P 1,000,000

MUNTINLUPA
Text 0920-9222495

BSJ_MUN002 UNFINISHED HSE & LOT
L.A. 204 sqm. F.A. 64 sqm.
(near City Hall)
Eagle Street, CAMELLA 2E, Putatan
Min. Bid Price: P1,300,000

BSJ_MUN003 COMMERCIAL LOT
L.A. 19,373 sqm.
(former Pepsi Plant)
National Road, TUNASAN
Min. Bid Price: P 200,000,000

QUEZON CITY
Text 0928-3771111

BSJ_QC005 2-STRY. APARTMENT
L.A. 58.6 sqm. F.A. 98 sqm.
(near AFP Medical Center)
Maaksa Street, BRGY. PINAHAN
Min. Bid Price: P1,200,000

BARAS-RIZAL
Text 0921-5094967

BSJ_RZL006 AGRI LAND
L.A. 66,787 sqm.
BARAS, Rizal (near Wells Resort)
Min. Bid Price: P 8,000,000

BAGUIO
Text 0918-5328111

BSJ_BAG008 3-UNITS HSE & LOT
L.A. 968 sqm. F.A. 516.50 sqm.
Mana Basa St., PACDAL
(near St. Joseph Church)
Min. Bid Price: P 5,500,000

BSJ_BAG009 AGRI LAND
L.A. 4,740 sqm.
Brgy. Tekiyan,LA TRINIDAD
(infront of Caltex & Shell)
Min. Bid Price: P 10,000,000

BSJ_BAG010 AGRI LAND
L.A. 10,000 sqm. (along the hi-way)
Dacian Poblacion, TUBA
Min. Bid Price: P 1,800,000

BULACAN
Text 0927-3333733

BSJ_BUL011 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 424 sqm. (near Tabang Exit NLEX)
266 Lanzones St., VIOLETA SUBD.
Sta. Cruz, Guiguinto
Min. Bid Price: P 1,300,000

BSJ_BUL012AGRI LAND
L.A. 32,098 sqm.
(interior Lot Near NFA Warehouse)
Brgy. Malmpang, SAN ILDEFONSO
Min. Bid Price: P 3,000,000

BSJ_BUL013 AGRI LAND (No ROW)
L.A. 17,586 sqm. (Interior Lot)
Brgy. Diliman II, SAN RAFAEL
Min. Bid Price: P 1,000,000

BSJ_BUL014 18-RESIDENTIAL LOTS
L.A. 9,485 sqm. (w/ various H& L)
DON MELCHOR SUBDIVISION
Brgy. Sta. Ana Bulacan Bulacan
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000

BSJ_BUL015 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 185 sqm. (near Marilao NLEX Exit)
METROGATE SUBDIVISION
Bo. Lambakin, Marilao
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000

BSJ_BUL016 RESIDENTIAL LOT
L.A. 170 sqm.
Along the road (near Barangay Hall)
CITYLAND SUBDIVISION
Pulong Buhangin, Sta. Maria
Min. Bid Price: P 200,000

LAGUNA
Text 0920-6883473

BSJ_LGN017 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 342 sqm. F.A. 120 sqm.
(near Bifian Market)
Tarlac corner Bulacan, GENEROSA
SUBD., Cabuyao/Calamba
Min. Bid Price: P1,000,000

BSJ_LGN018 BUNGALOW HSE & LOT
L.A. 415 sqm. F.A. 165 sqm.
Carnation St., ROSEVILLE SUBD.
Brgy. Malitlit, Sta. Rosa City
(infront of Meralco Office)
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

NUEVA ECIJA
Text 0915-6002733

BSJ_NE019 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 2,922 sqm. (near Campino)
Purok 4 Kalikid Sur, CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P1,100,000

BSJ_NE020 RSDL LOT
L.A. 2,380 sqm. (near Brgy. Hall)
Buhran, CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 1,000,000

BSJ_NE021HOUSE & LOT
L.A.120 sqm. F.A. 80 sqm.
(near Mc Donalds)
Poblacion,CABANATUAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 1,100,000

OLONGAPO
Text 0928-3771111

BSJ_PAM022 2 STRY. BLDG.
L.A. 1,115 sqm. F.A.470.70 sqm.
NATIONAL HI-WAY, Upper Kalaklan
Min. Bid Price: P 15,000,000

BSJ_PAM026 2 UNITS HSE & LOT
L.A. 440 sqm. F.A. 176.50 sqm.
GORDON HEIGHTS
Min. Bid Price: P 1,300,000

PAMPANGA
Text 0928-3771111

BSJ_PAM024 SUGARLAND
L.A. 200,000 sqm.
Brgy. ACLI Road, MEXICO
Min. Bid Price: P 20,000,000

BSJ_PAM025 AGRI LAND
L.A. 134,137 sqm. (near Minalin Municipal Hall)
San Nicolas, MINALIN
Min. Bid Price: P12,000,000

PANGASINAN
Text 0915-4348252

BSJ_PNG027 2-STOREY BLDG.
L.A. 1,258 sqm.
(near Putting Bato Church)
Bonuan Boquig, DAGUPAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P1,300,000

BSJ_PNG028 2-STRY. HSE & LOT
L.A. 1,143 sqm. F.A. 177.50 sqm.
Macalong ASINGAN
(near Asingan Proper)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,000,000

BSJ_PNG029 2-STRY. HSE & LOT
L.A. 500 sqm. F.A. 437 sqm.
(near Jollibee)
Bo. Nancayasan, URDANETA CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 6,300,000

BSJ_PNG031 2-STRY. HSE & LOT
L.A. 275/251 sqm. F.A. 265/50/40 sqm.
(near former DZRD radio Station)
Bonuan Gueset Catactang,
DAGUPAN CITY
Min. Bid Price: P 3,800,000

BSJ_PNG032 4 UNITS APARTMENT
L.A. 308 sqm. F.A. 150 sqm.
Brgy. Dumampot ASINGAN
(near Poo Cemetery)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,100,000

BSJ_PNG033 PIGGERY & WRHSE
L.A. 3,968 sqm. F.A. 502 sqm.
(near welcome Arc of Asingan Proper)
Bo. Cadastral Macalong ASINGAN
Min. Bid Price: P1,200,000

BSJ_PNG034 SINGLE STRY. BLDG.
L.A. 28.952 sqm.
San Gabriel II, BAYAMBANG
Min. Bid Price: P 1,200,000

BSJ_PNG035 2-STRY. HSE & LOT
L.A. 558 sqm. F.A. 455/189/72 sqm.
Malindong BINMALEY
(near Binmaley Town proper)
Min. Bid Price: P 4,000,000

BSJ_PNG036 SINGLE STRY. BLDG.
L.A. 744 sqm. F.A. 64 sqm.
(near Soconi Intersectn)
Poblacion, MUN. OF BUNGALON
Min. Bid Price: P 3,000,000

BSJ_PNG038 2-STRY. BLDG.
L.A. 962 sqm. F.A. 481.22 sqm.
Poblacion MANGALDAN
(near Mangaldan Town Proper)
Min. Bid Price: P 6,500,000

BSJ_PNG039 BUNGALOW HSE & LOT
L.A. 1,758 sqm. F.A. 54 sqm.
Bansoang, MANGALDAN
(near Mangaldan Public Market)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,500,000

BSJ_PNG040 FISHPOND
L.A. 15,215 sqm.
(near Malabago Intersection)
Bo. Llanas MANGALDAN
Min. Bid Price: P1,100,000

BSJ_PNG041 AGRI LAND
L.A. 36,001 sqm.
(near Rosales Town Proper)
Bo. Tumma & Cabaladangan, ROSALES
Min. Bid Price: P 1,200,000

TAGAYTAY
Text 0917-5443063

BSJ_TGY042 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 3,722 sqm. (w/Farm Lot)
(near Tagaytay Rotonda & Tagaytay Picnic Grove) BRGY. SAN JOSE
Min. Bid Price: P7,000,000

TARLAC
Text 0916-3086112

BSJ_TAR043 AGRI LAND
L.A. 208,447 sqm.
Bo. Bacsay, CAMILING
(Along the bamo road)
Min. Bid Price: P1,200,000

BSJ_TAR045 AGRI LAND
L.A. 157,221 sqm.
BO. IBA
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

BSJ_TAR046 2-STRY. HSE & LOT
L.A. 1,498 sqm. F.A. 415.40 sqm.
San Manuel (Near Mc Arthur Hway)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,800,000

BAJ_TAR047 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,831 sqm. F.A. 100 sqm.
Bo. Sapang, MARAGUI
Min. Bid Price: P 800,000

BSJ_TAR048 AGRI LAND
L.A. 128,035 sqm. (Along Bo. Road)
CALIPAYAN, Sta. Ignacia
Min. Bid Price: P 1,000,000

BSJ_TAR049 3 UNITS POULTRY HOUSES & STORAGE
L.A. 17,514 sqm. F.A. 1,842 sqm.
NAMBALAN, Sta. Ignacia
(near Romulo Highway)
Min. Bid Price: P 2,800,000

BSJ_TAR051 2 STRY. BLDG.
L.A. 1,973 sqm. F.A. 538.14 sqm.
POBLACION (Near Ramos Hospital)
Min. Bid Price: P 12,000,000

BSJ_TAR052 RSDL LOT
L.A. 553 sqm.
BO. OF SAN RAFAEL, San Roque
Min. Bid Price: P 1,400,000

BSJ_TAR053 2-STRY. HSE & LOT
L.A. 240 sqm. F.A. 268 sqm.
SAN SEBASTIAN SUBD. San Roque
Min. Bid Price: P1,800,000

BSJ_TAR054 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 409 sqm. F.A. 287 sqm.
BO. SAN RAFAEL
(near Mc Arthur Hway)
Min. Bid Price: P2,500,000

BSJ_TAR055 AGRI LOT
L.A. 5,967 sqm. (near Mc Arthur Hway)
BO. SAN ROQUE
Min. Bid Price: P 12,000,000

BSJ_TAR056 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 302 sqm. F.A. 116 sqm.
SAN SEBASTIAN SUBD.,
San Roque
Min. Bid Price: P1,500,000

BSJ_TAR057 HOUSE & LOT
L.A. 1,026 sqm.
STA. CRUZ (Along Mc Arthur Hway)
Min. Bid Price: P1,100,000

BSJ_TAR058 AGRI/RSDL LOT
L.A. 5,475 sqm.
TIBAG (along the road)
Min. Bid Price: P1,000,000

BSJ_TAR059 2-STRY. HSE & LOT
L.A. 300 sqm. F.A. 138.50 sqm.
KIPPING VILLAGE, Cacamingan Norte, Camiling
Min. Bid Price: P 1,400,000

BSJ_TAR060 AGRI/RSDL LOT
L.A. 1,750 sqm.
Bo. Caturay, GERONA
(along Mc Arthur Hway)
Min. Bid Price: P 1,000,000

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HP unveils Vista-based PCs

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban

SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA—WITH A NEW operating system comes new lineups.

In a radical shift in how personal computers are conceived and positioned, Hewlett Packard Asia Pacific and Japan unveiled a new consumer PC category, along with an array of updated consumer desktops and notebooks optimized to run on Microsoft's long-awaited Windows Vista operating system.

"People are rapidly moving on to high-definition lifestyle, generating and sharing their own personal digital content and enjoying higher quality movies and music," said Adrian Koch, HP Asia-Pacific and Japan personal systems group SVP, during the company's regional press launch held at the Shilla Hotel Seoul. "HP has the broadest portfolio of computing products and partnership that can transform and enhance their lifestyle computing experience."

Firsts

Together with Hon Cheng Chin, HP vice president for Asia Pacific and Japan personal systems, consumer products and mobile business, Koch presented the company's latest product offering composed of five consumer desktop PC models and nine consumer notebook models, all preloaded with Microsoft's latest operating system, the Windows Vista, as well as the 2007 Microsoft Office system.

"We are pleased to achieve a number of firsts with this launch: the first all-in-one touch screen PC, the first entertainment consumer touch screen notebook PC, as well as the first in the region to go-to-market with the new industrial design for our family of HP Pavilion and Compaq Presario desktop PCs," Koch said. "This is definitely milestone-setting and demonstrates how this region has emerged as one of the most important growth markets for HP globally."

Chin also said that HP has worked extensively with Microsoft for years to develop complementary products and services across its portfolio.

"With this collaboration, HP is once again in the forefront of bringing out the best and trend-setting products for our customers," Chin said.

Vista-based

The TouchSmart PC leads HP's latest lineup of desktops, that also include the HP Pavilion a5000, HP Pavilion Slimline s3000, HP Pavilion Media Center m8000, HP Pavilion v7000 and Compaq Presario SR5000 systems.

The TouchSmart PC is regarded as the company's first stab at an all-in-one PC, as well as its first desktop system to incorporate a touch-screen display.

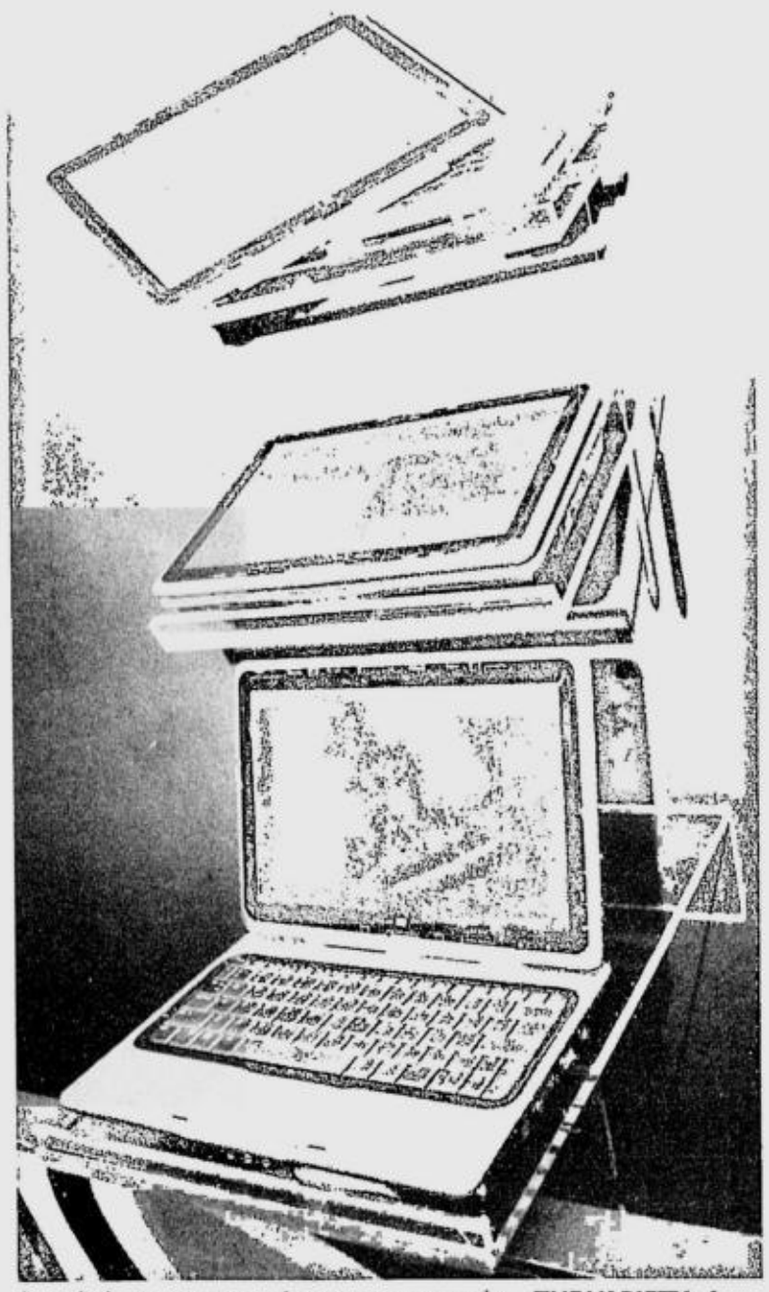
HP Consumer PC global business unit digital home product marketing director Ameer Karim said the TouchSmart PC employs a clean profile that integrates the CPU and 19-inch monitor that requires only a single power cord to start.

"The main attraction is its touch screen and HP SmartCenter interface that allows easy access to movies and music," he said.

Karim demonstrated that by using just the fingers (there's also a stylus and a stowable keyboard), one could easily leave notes for another family member to view, perform video conferencing via an integrated 1.3-megapixel camera, or even print pictures via an HP portable printer (sold separately) that can be attached at the back of the monitor.

The touch screen is also useful for quickly queuing up media files for playback via a connected TV, a stereo system, or the unit's built-in display and speakers.

"This particular product is so fun to use, powerful and intuitive that it could fit in a wide range of environments in the home—from living room to home office to kitchen," Karim explained.



THE VARIETY of modes one can do with the tx1000's versatile screen

Refreshed

HP also refreshed its line of notebooks, now optimized to work on the new operating system.

What is noteworthy is the induction of a new member to its Pavilion entertainment notebook series, namely the dv2200, dv6200, dv9200, and the tx1000 portable.

Among these entertainment-centic laptop models (with widescreen display, mini remote control, illuminated quick play buttons, powerful graphic cards and high performance Altec Lansing speakers), the tx1000 stands out as it is a convertible tablet PC.

This portable notebook packs a 1.3-megapixel webcam, 5-in-1 digital media reader, a mini remote control for movies, music and photos. It comes with the Vista installed, and weighs just 1.9 kilos (the optical bay is also removable for those who really need to travel light).

The tx1000's 12.1-inch screen swivels clockwise to turn itself into a tablet, making it perfect for watching movies or giving presentations. For those too tired to reach for their laptop while watching a movie, the tx1000 also has a mini remote control hidden in the ExpressCard slot.

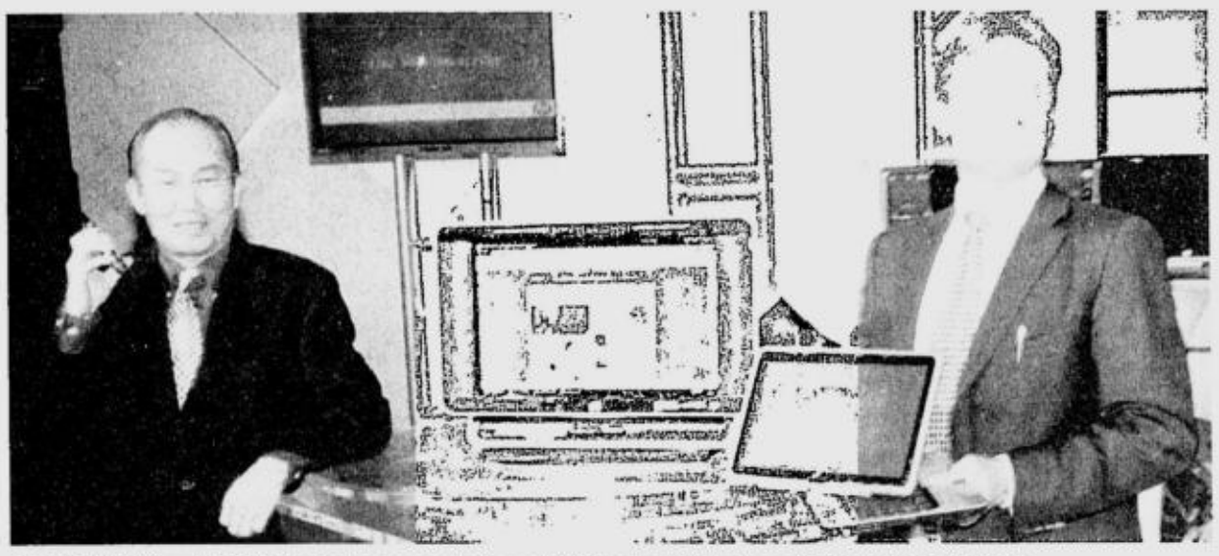
Also making these new range of consumer PCs unique from HP's previous models is the new industrial design, featuring a black glossy finish with subtle wavy line imprints.

"Design is one of the many things we use to differentiate ourselves," said Julie McDonald, HP Consumer PC global business unit product marketing head. "The new design should bring a subtle touch of style to our new lineup."

McDonald showed that the products also feature latch-free closure, touch-technology launch buttons, and an AC power port that lights up when one is charging the battery.

"This is just the start of a huge focus on new industrial designs that HP will be doing throughout its product lineups in the coming months and years," she said.

KARIM explained the HP TouchSmart PC is regarded as the company's first stab at an all-in-one PC as well as its first desktop system to incorporate a touch-screen display.



KOCH (LEFT) and CHIN leads the presentation of HP's latest Vista-based PC products in Korea

Palm targets PDA market

By Riza T. Olchondra

MARKET ANALYSTS PREDICT THAT IN just four years, one in four of wireless handsets around the world will be a personal digital assistant phone that can send e-mail, browse the Internet, send pictures, play music and make and receive calls like never before.

Palm wants to get a big piece of the action and has started its campaign in the Philippines with the introduction of its Palm Treo 680 PDA phone in partnership with Globe Telecom.

Palm is encouraged by the study of market research firm In-Stat, which revealed that 25 percent of all wireless handsets worldwide will be PDA phones by 2011.

Its own research suggests that there was room for its new phone because there was definite interest in feature-packed phones among current and potential mobile phone owners.

One reason why cellular phone users have not purchased PDA phones was that they feared they were too expensive and too difficult to use.

Palm claims the Treo 680 is an affordable, and simple way to get started and stay connected using PDA phones.

The Palm Treo 680, now available to Globe subscribers, supports GSM, GPRS and EDGE networks.

Globe said its subscribers would find the Treo 680 PDA phone packed with various features such as e-mail, web browsing, messaging and multimedia.

"Globe is proud to be the first operator in the Philippines to bring the Treo 680 smartphone, with its award-winning operating system and ease of use, to its individual and corporate subscribers," said Jesus C. Romero, head of the enterprise business group of Globe Telecom.

The Treo 680 goes for P24,000 in all Globe Telecom business centers and hubs in the country.

Globe corporate customers can get the Treo 680 free under Plan 1800, while individuals can get the Treo 680 free under Plan 2500.

"The Treo 680 smartphone is reaching new customers and markets, exemplifying Palm's dedication to expanding both geographically and demographically," said John Hartnett, senior vice president, global markets, Palm Inc.

"Small, sleek and fast, the Treo 680 will attract a broader range of users who want an easy-to-use solution to manage and balance their work and personal lives while on the go."

Known for its ease of use, Palm differentiates the Treo 680 PDA phone from others in the Treo family by offering the following features along with many additional enhancements: internal antenna and slim form factor, making the device small and sleek; a full, easy-to-use keyboard, perfect for writing SMS messages and e-mail, and a 320x320 color screen for viewing web pages, photos, media and more.

The Treo 680 has a phone user interface that further simplifies Treo innovations, such as the ability to respond to calls with a preset text message and add new phone numbers to existing contact information, and three-way calling.

The messaging application on the Treo 680 displays text-messaging conversations as "threaded chats," similar to instant messaging, so users can see their entire conversation with another person.

The Treo 680 PDA phone can also be used as an MP3 player and has an integrated digital camera with video-capture support and video player.

Its additional features include: 64MB of user-available storage, nearly three times the memory of the Treo 650 PDA phone, which can be expanded to 2GB with expansion cards (sold separately) for large music or video files; improved e-mail and messaging capabilities.

Palm Inc., a leader in mobile computing, strives to put the power of computing in people's hands so they can access and share their most important information.

The company's products for consumers, mobile professionals and businesses include Palm Treo PDA-Phones, Palm handheld computers, and Palm LifeDrive mobile managers, as well as software, services and accessories.

Palm products are sold through select Internet, retail, reseller and wireless operator channels, and at Palm Retail Stores and Palm online stores

"The Treo 680 is the right step toward helping our corporate subscribers move to a richer and more full-featured mobile experience that helps them work efficiently while on the move. This is the kind of innovation that Globe is committed to bring to the wireless voice and data market," Romero said.

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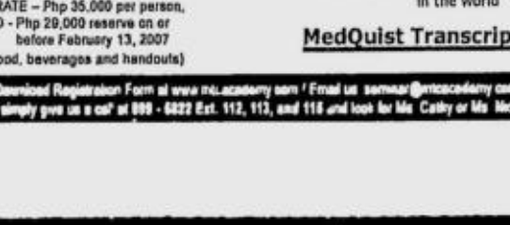

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-Mr. Tamayo

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- MT Process and Delivery
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- Medical Transcription Simulation
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Mobile workforce seen a major trend in Asia Pacific

By Abigail L. Ho

THE ADVENT OF NEW WIRELESS TECHnologies and the devices that support these will see Asia-Pacific workers becoming more mobile this year, IT market research firm Springboard Research said.

In a recently issued report, the company says mobility would be a major trend in the region this year and would become a key element of the enterprises' IT strategy.

As the number of mobile professionals grows and wireless technologies such as WiMAX and Wi-Fi become more pervasive, Asia-Pacific enterprises will likely start adopting clearer and more long-term strategic approaches to mobile technologies deployment.

"Despite being on the horizon for many years now, mobility adoption in organizations has not been particularly widespread. Despite a growing number of mobile workers, organizations have little to support them or extract real business value out of mobility. We expect 2007 to be different," Springboard Research says.

While companies are expected to embrace mobility in the workplace, they still have to face the fact that mobility has a very "personal nature," making it hard to control.

Springboard Research says enterprises should learn how to manage mobility within their IT environments, to ensure that its benefits will be optimized.

The ever-changing behavior of mobile users and the interweaving of personal and business mobility will be tough challenges to overcome for Asia-Pacific firms this year if they want to take advantage of having a mobile workforce.

Springboard Research also expects chief information officers (CIOs) to invest in technology, products and services that will allow their companies to "do more with less" and that are more aligned with their business needs.

CIOs will focus on optimizing network performance, fueling the demand for less complex applications that do not consume much bandwidth and do not add to network complexity, according to the research firm.

They will also continue to deploy applications that are easy to configure and that users can use with little intervention by the IT department.

This will be one of the key factors driving many organizations to consider software as a service (SaaS), or getting a software provider to also provide the necessary maintenance and support for the products that they deploy.

Springboard Research says Asia-Pacific enterprises are seen embracing SaaS, seeking more external support, as they focus more on their business and less on IT.

This is particularly true for small and medium businesses that do not traditionally outsource applications. The research firm says SaaS will step in to enable SMBs to leverage world-class, robust applications that they do not have to manage.

Considering this, IT vendors are seen increasingly targeting SMBs with a wide range of outsourced and managed services, packaging these to suit the SMBs' IT budgets.

As SMBs expand and the positive economic climate in the region continues, more and more of them will become early adopters of outsourced IT and managed services.

Banks' dollar cap to be raised to pre-crisis level

By Doris C. Dumlao

AS PART OF A REFORM PACKAGE to liberalize the foreign exchange system, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas plans to raise banks' allowable dollar purchases as a share of unimpaired capital—known as the overbought limit—to the pre-Asian crisis ratio of 20 percent.

But the eight-fold increase in the overbought limit—from the current cap of 2.5 percent of unimpaired capital, or $5 million, whichever is lower—would be matched by a 20-percent limit on the oversold position, or the amount of dollars the banks are allowed to sell to the open market, banking sources said.

The BSP had already consulted some bank representatives on the 20-percent overbought/20-percent oversold formula, banking sources said.

"This is the formula that we're hearing from the BSP itself," one banker said.

According to another banker, many of the local banks are happy about the proposed settings, but some foreign banks think it may still be too tight if the nominal dollar limit will be scrapped. Foreign banks' unimpaired capital for local operations is usually much smaller than the big local players.

In an interview, BSP deputy governor for bank supervision Nestor Espenilla Jr. said authorities have yet to finalize the overbought/oversold formula. But he told reporters it would not be a surprise if the BSP were to restore the settings seen before the Asian currency turmoil erupted in 1997, and if the same cap would be imposed on both the "buy" and "sell" side.

"The limits (in other countries in the region) are usually within 20-30 percent, and it's very common that the limit is symmetric," Espenilla said, citing the BSP's study on practices abroad.

The Philippines is the only place where the overbought and oversold limits are not equal, he said. This situation dated back to a time when there was a shortage in dollars and thus the overbought limit was tightened, while no cap was imposed on the oversold position.

If the BSP were to restore the limits to pre-Asian crisis levels, this move should only be taken as a good sign, he said.

"When you start raising it and making it equal (to the oversold limit), that represents a normalization process," Espenilla said. "Our reserves are at very high levels. The balance of payments is strong. We are prepaying our debts. All of these are signs that we are no longer in crisis mode. If we don't feel we are out of crisis mode, we won't even talk about forex liberalization."

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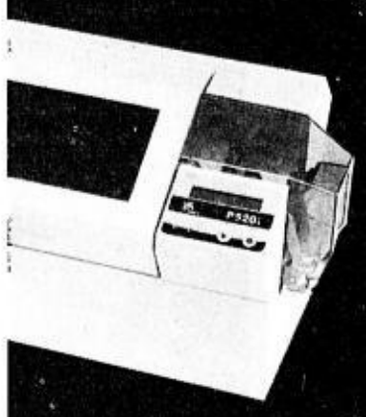

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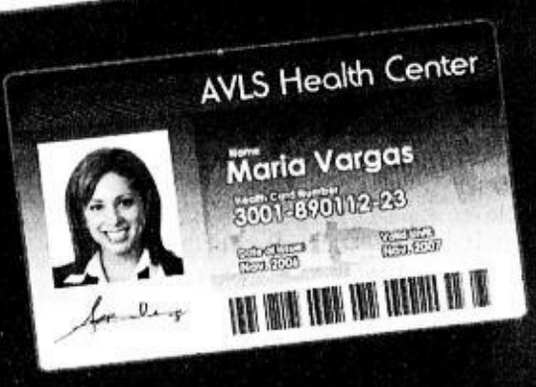

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BOC to require traders to pay through banks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF CUSTOMS, TRYING TO shed off its "corrupt" image, will soon require traders to pay various customs fees through banks, instead of handing over payments directly to BOC personnel.

According to Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales, getting rid of face-to-face transactions between BOC personnel and traders is one of the measures that the agency intends to carry out to improve revenue collection and ensure proper payment of fees, such as import duties.

Morales said that channeling payments of customs fees through banks would help plug leaks in collection.

The BOC, the government's second biggest revenue earner next to the Bureau of Internal Revenue, collected P198.2 billion in taxes, duties and other fees last year, exceeding the P196-billion official target set for it by the national government.

For performing exceptionally well last year, BOC personnel are entitled to incentives as promised under the Lateral Attrition Law, Morales said.

The law says over-performance in revenue collection merits monetary incentives, while under-performance could lead to demotion or reassignment, if not dismissal.

Although the BOC went beyond its 2006 collection target, the agency could have generated much more had problems such as leaks and smuggling been addressed.

Based on published estimates, the government loses about P200 billion in potential revenue a year due to direct and technical smuggling.

Firms urged to go into production of coco products

By Ronnel W. Domingo

SMALL AND MID-SIZED COMPANIES ARE being encouraged to go into the production of coconut-based sugar and vinegar products to address rising demand, especially in the United States.

According to the Philippine Coconut Authority, Balingasag town in Misamis Oriental is the only source of coconut sugar exports at present.

Through the Filipino-owned, California-based OMMI Herbal Trading, coconut sugar was able to penetrate the growing US specialty food market.

Developed by the PCA, the product comes from the liquid obtained from the tender unopened buds of coconut, also known as tuba or coconut toddy.

Said to be rich in amino acids and vitamins, coconut sugar is a natural organic product much sought by health enthusiasts.

This type of venture in the rural areas involves farm-level technology. The product fetches P100 per kilo—triple the price of ordinary sugar.

OMMI Herbal has shipped at least 300 metric tons to the US while an introductory shipment of one ton was also sent to South Korea.

Also, Sorsogon Foods Enterprise, maker of the "Lola Conching" coco nectar vinegar brand, has made headway in the US market.

SFE makes the classic coco nectar vinegar as well as the "virgin" product which is blended with mother-of-vinegar, or the liquid that forms on top of unfiltered and unpasteurized vinegar.

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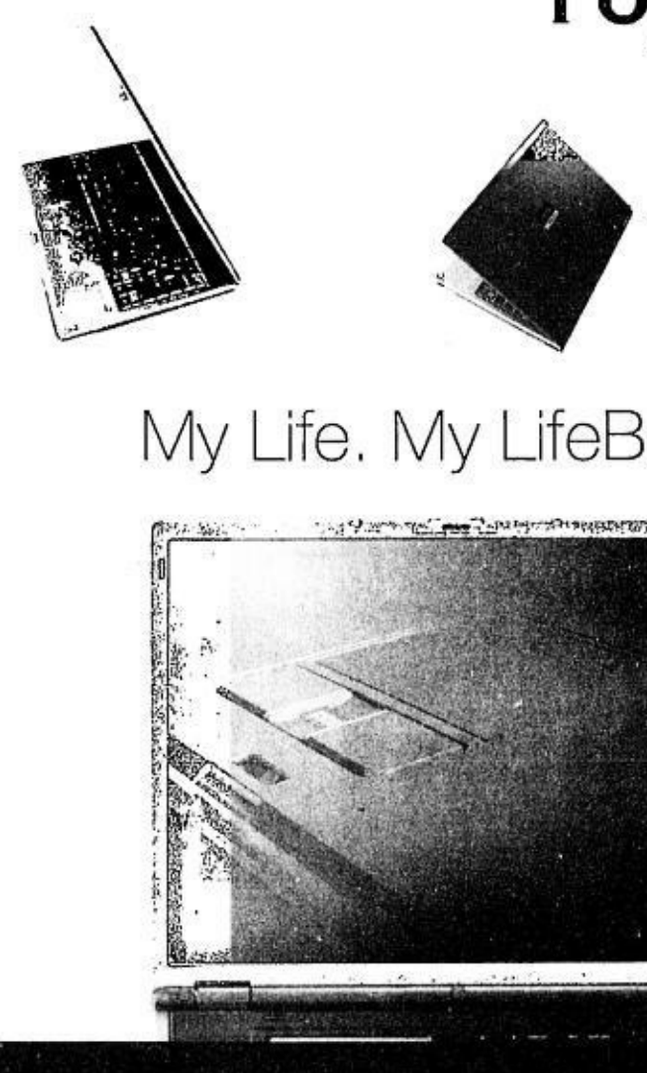

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Editor Aries Espinosa

Stopping heart attacks possible at St. Luke's Heart Institute

THE HEART INSTITUTE OF THE ST. Luke's Medical Center offers cutting-edge technologies that detect early-stage heart disease and remove in their early stages dangerous blockages in the arteries of the heart, ultimately stopping a heart attack before it starts.

These life-saving tests available at St. Luke's Heart Institute are Nuclear Stress Testing; Echocardiography; Coronary Angiography/Cardiac Catheterization Laboratory (Cathlab); Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI); 64-Slice CT Scanner; and Positron Emission Tomography (PET) Scanner.

All six tests were featured in the Sept 5, 2005 cover story of Time magazine titled "How To Stop A Heart Attack Before It Happens". The Time article explained the many technological advances in the area of diagnostic imaging, which helps doctors make accurate diagnoses and prescribe targeted treatments. It also showed in amazing detail the different and newest heart scan equipment doctors use to save a heart patient's life.

St. Luke's Medical Center is the only healthcare facility in the Philippines that has all of the advanced equipment featured in the Time cover story.

Silent killer

"A heart attack occurs when one or more blood vessels that carries oxygen-rich blood to the muscles of the heart-the coronary arteries-are blocked by plaque, causing the heart muscles to die," says Dr. Antonio Sibulo Jr, St. Luke's Heart Institute director.

Plaque is composed of deposits of cholesterol, other fats and calcium, among others, which accumulate in the inner wall of the coronary arteries. Risk factors such as a high-fat diet, high blood pressure, smoking, diabetes and a family history of early heart disease can result in plaque accumulation in the coronary arteries, which is known as atherosclerosis, coronary artery disease (CAD), or simply heart disease.

"Plaque build-up, which usually takes years, leads to narrowing of the coronary arteries resulting in the reduction of blood flow to the heart muscle," Sibulo explains. "Inadequate supply of oxygen and nutrients to the heart muscle may cause chest pain in some people while others experience no symptoms."

Life-saving technologies

State-of-the-art diagnostic imaging technologies available at the Heart Institute enable cardiologists to detect and treat early-stage heart disease, even in apparently healthy individuals.

"Using our 64-slice CT scanner, we can compute the buildup of calcium in arteries of the heart. With our intravascular ultrasound, we can detect the presence and degree of coronary artery narrowing, which can lead to a heart attack," says Sibulo.

"On the other hand, our 3-Tesla MRI provides accurate analysis of artery-clogging plaque while our PET scan enables us to screen for coronary artery disease. Our Cathlab performs a procedure called cardiac catheterization, which causes less patient discomfort and reduces the risk of complications and death in selected patients."

"With our Gamma Camera/CT machine, we can determine when there is insufficient blood supply to the muscles of the heart. Our Heart Rate Variability [HRV] facility identifies patients at risk for sudden cardiac death."

The next-generation 64-slice CT scanner is the gold standard in diagnostic imaging technology; St. Luke's Medical Center has the first operational 64-slice CT scanner in the Philippines. It was the first medical facility in the country to offer Ivus and has the first and only second-generation Ivus (Virtual Histology) in the Philippines. It is also the country's first and only hospital equipped with a 3-Tesla MRI, which is far more advanced than conventional MRI.

St. Luke's was the first medical center in Southeast Asia to acquire a PET Scanner. In the Philippines, St. Luke's is currently the only medical facility equipped with a PET Scanner and Cyclotron. St. Luke's was also the first medical center in the country to acquire the Cardiac Cathlab System with flat panel detector. Its combined Gamma Camera/CT machine is the first and only one in the Philippines while its HRV facility is the first of its kind in the country.

At the heart of patient care

Patients of the Heart Institute can now pay for their procedures and services through BPI Express Credit, Security Bank Mastercard, DinersCard at 0-percent interest, at 3 and 6 months deferred payments.

St. Luke's Heart Institute is ably directed by top cardiologists, interventionalists and surgeons who are supported by a highly trained paramedical staff. The Institute has a 99-percent success rate in performing percutaneous cardiac intervention or PCI (a procedure to treat narrowed arteries of the heart) with a 98.9-percent survival rate, which compares favorably with the 97.9-percent survival rate of PCI procedures performed under the US National Medicare program.

The Heart Institute exemplifies St. Luke's Medical Center's unequalled excellence in expertise, technology, quality of healthcare outcomes, and service for total quality patient care in the country. It saves more lives and maintains the quality of life of more patients.

INQUIRER, ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

As part of its effort to provide news to audiences who have no time to read, INQUIRER has signed an agreement with Bright Screen, an indoor plasma screen provider, to carry its headlines and breaking news in all its installations in the country. Shown are (from left) Jocel Adorable, INQUIRER AVP and marketing director, Rodolfo Vergara, Bright Screen president, David Valdes, INQUIRER EVP and Freddie Infante, Bright Screen operations manager.

Make money with perfumery

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR A REAL MONEY-making opportunity, join the exciting and highly profitable perfumery business through Chemworld's perfume-making seminar/workshop.

Learn how to make and sell your own perfumes, colognes and aromatherapy products-under your own brand. You do not need any technical background. Chemworld will guide you step-by-step. You will learn hands-on all that you need to know. Chemworld supplies everything that you will need, from French essential oils to fragrance-grade alcohol, including a variety of packaging materials.

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Here's more! Invest at least P3,000 worth in fragrance supplies on the day you attend the seminar and get a free perfumery and aromatherapy manual worth P1,000. With this manual, you will go home confident with your new-found knowledge. So you can start making huge profits at once!

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Catch the Chemworld perfume-making seminar at suite 404 Executive Building Center, 369 Sen. Gil Puyat Avenue corner Makati Avenue, Makati City (across Petron) every Tuesday from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. or every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 12:30 noon.

Initial investment is only P500 for the starter pack you will use during the hands-on. What you blend during the workshop, you get to bring home which you can easily sell for twice your investment.

Seats are limited to 10 participants and by reservation only. Confirm your participation by calling 895-4410 or texting 0917-3252444/0920-5491107.

TSOKO.NUT BATIROL OPENS 4TH BRANCH

Pinoy 'tsokolate' and coffee shop Tsoko.Nut Batirol opened a branch at Dela Rosa Carpark I, Makati Jan. 23. Nearby offices can now indulge in their favorite hot drinks and native food treats, matched with homey and modern Pinoy ambience. Aside from its 'tsokolate batirol', 'suman sa mangga', 'ensaymada' with 'quezo de bola', 'bibingka' with 'kesong puti' and 'itlog na pula', Tsoko.Nut also serves special rice meals catering to those who want a feel as if they're home for lunch. Shown is owner Marian Romano (right) with Dela Rosa business partners (from left) Teddy Perena, Ophel Alcantara and Ariel Sunico. Visit other branches at SM Makati, Waltermart Pasong Tamo and South Supermarket Alabang. For inquiries, e-mail tsoko.nut.batirol@gmail.com

Meat firm helps fund nutrition program

TOP MEAT PROCESSING FIRM CDO-FOODsphere Inc is donating P5 from the proceeds of each box of CDO Holiday Whole Meat Ham it sold in December 2006 for an ongoing nutrition program for poor Filipino children.

Akel Galangan, regional sales manager of CDO, said the company decided to allot the amount to a supplemental feeding program for undernourished kids as "a showcase of its corporate social responsibility."

Galangan said that through the donation of CDO, even those who did not buy ham during the Christmas season stand to benefit from the nutrition program of the company, which has initiated a bold move to lift thousands of indigent children out of malnutrition.

Galangan explained that under the advocacy campaign, the company is donating P5 from each box of CDO Holiday Whole Meat Ham that was sold in December to Gabay Buhay project, a supplemental feeding program administered by Odyssey Foundation Inc.

Launched on July 4, 2004, Odyssey Foundation is a non-stock, non-profit organization that aims to improve the daily nutritional intake of children in poor communities. Since the Foundation was launched, more than 2,000 children have benefited from the supplemental feeding program in cooperation with other humanitarian organizations in Metro Manila and Bulacan.

Through the new donation of CDO-Foodsphere, the nutrition program will be able to benefit another 2,000 undernourished kids this year.

Under the 64-day supplemental feeding program, children are given food and vitamins, courtesy of CDO-Foodsphere and pharmaceutical company United Laboratories.

Odyssey Foundation said it is committed to continue its supplemental feeding program and other projects to help reduce the incidence of hunger and malnutrition among Filipino children.

Hirudoid: superior skin disorder solution

THERE ARE OVER A THOUSAND KNOWN skin disorders, the most common of which are bruises, scars, and varicose veins.

Scientific research shows that there are two types of varicose veins: primary and secondary varicose veins.

Scars, also a common skin disorder that can occur in almost any part of the human body, appear in different shapes and sizes.

Bruises are caused by injuries to blood vessels which lead to collection of blood onto surrounding skin tissues.

To address the health risks and aesthetic problems caused by these highly prevalent skin disorders, Hirudoid, the most effective medication for the treatment of the early stages of varicose veins and other skin disorders like scars and bruises, has been made available in the local market.

The efficacy of Hirudoid is due to an active ingredient called Muccopolysaccharide Polysulfate or MPS, which is known to have anticoagulant, antithrombotic, and anti-inflammatory effects.

According to Diethelm (Philippines) Inc brand manager Raymond Hernandez, "Hirudoid treats specific skin disorders by improving blood flow, improving the skin's moisturizing capacity, and promoting tissue regeneration."

Also proof of Hirudoid's efficacy is the medicine's ability to penetrate directly into the location of the skin disorder, its ability to be absorbed 50 times better than other brands, and its regenerative effect on skin tissue.

The Hirudoid brand is owned by Medinova, a division of Diethelm.

Hirudoid is available in leading drug stores nationwide in the following variants and prices: Hirudoid cream 14 tube (P241.43), Hirudoid cream 40 tube (P524.64), Hirudoid gel 14 tube (P248.06) Hirudoid gel 40 tube (P534.59).

MEASURING SPEED

Popular tuning firm Speedlab recently held a Media Dynamometer Day at its facility along 871 Quezon Avenue, Quezon City. Manufactured by Dastek from South Africa, the chassis dynamometer of Speedlab accurately measures the power output of any vehicle by measuring the amount of torque and speed the car generates at the dynamometer's rollers. 'On this chassis-type dyno, we measure the torque and multiply it with the road speed of the wheels,' states Sidney Ang, president of Speedlab. Dynamometer session rates start at P4,500. Baseline or power reading is pegged at P2,500 and club dyno sessions is priced at P2,000 per car with a required minimum of 20 cars. 'We are offering special discounts as an introductory offer to patrons who wish to find out the real power output of their vehicle,' relates Ang. Speedlab is also the authorized and exclusive distributor of high performance parts and accessories like K&N filters, Bilstein shocks, H&R springs, Unichip ECU, Motul Oil and Lubricants, and Nitrous Express systems for cars and motorcycles. To quench that need for speed, get in touch with Speedlab at 376-4648/376-4651 or log on to www.speedlab.com.ph.

Living the balanced life with Nesvita

NOW MEET TWO ACCOMplished women who do more than excel in their chosen fields.

Sandra Araullo is an inspiring picture of balance. Aside from being a champion triathlete, she is also a student completing her Master's Degree in Physics at the University of the Philippines, where she also teaches college Physics.

"It is my innate curiosity about the world and appreciation of nature that led me to the sciences," she says. Thus far, her academic life has been nothing short of fulfilling. "It is my first year as an instructor and I am enjoying it tremendously. I dare say my students are enjoying it as well," she shares.

Araullo gets asked many times how she is able to squeeze in her schooling with sports. She smiles, "The truth is, I really don't know. When I want to accomplish something, I just go for it with everything I've got."

Just as she is committed to schooling, so Araullo is dedicated to being a triathlete, an endurance multi-sport that includes swimming, cycling, and running. She says, "The discipline involved in doing sports at a competitive level demands a lot of hard work and sacrifice."

Araullo has been in the sport for almost seven years now. She is currently the women's national champion. To date, she has competed in two world championships and three Asian championship events. In December 2005 when the Philippines hosted the Southeast Asian Games, she won for the country the second overall female in triathlon.

Pia Boren, on the other hand, credits her racecar success to the discipline and hard work she nurtured as a go-kart enthusiast. Boren's hard work paid off: she became the first female to drive a Formula 3 car. She states, "I knew I had to step up my competitive spirit when I became a racer. I had to hone a different set of skills and adjust to a new discipline, which proved to be a little more physically demanding."

"Of course, I still have a life," Boren chuckles. Away from the tracks, she hangs out with friends and enjoys the occasional nightouts and restaurant-hopping.

Indeed, despite their busy schedules, Araullo and Boren are making efforts to balance their social, academic, and sporting lives. They are taking care of their well-being to be able to enjoy life to the fullest. In fact, for people like them who lead diverse, active lifestyles, the right kind of food is paramount.

Take Nesvita's Cereal Milk Drink, for example. It is calcium-rich milk for healthier and stronger muscles, teeth, and bones. It contains fiber-filled wheat that flushes out toxins from one's system, plus vitamins and minerals to help the body cope with stress. Nesvita's Cereal Milk Drink now comes in a delicious choco-malt flavor-something everyone will enjoy again and again.

Lourdes School QC alumni homecoming

THE LOURDES SCHOOL of Quezon City Alumni Association (LSQCAA), in cooperation with silver jubilarians LSQC Batch 1982, invites all alumni to its grand alumni homecoming celebration dubbed "Rewind: Blast From The Past!" on Feb 24, Saturday, at the LSQC Grade School Grounds, Apo Street, Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City. Registration starts at 6 p.m. For more information, call the LSQCAA office at 781-6475 or 0919-6094628, or log on to www.lsqcaa.org

MPSPC 15th anniversary

Over 5,000 students, parents, and teachers of Mountain Provinces State Polytechnic College paraded with their streamers and slogan expressing their gratitude to Mountain Province Rep. Victor S. Dominguez for 'providing free tertiary education in MPSPC' during the celebration of their 15th Charter Day-after having been established as state college in 1992 by virtue of Republic Act 7182 authored by Dominguez. The program covered free tuition and miscellaneous fees of the students coming from the province. According to Dominguez, his next project is to lobby with the Pagcor a 25-year tuition since his current free-education program is coterminous with his office.

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DONG-A PHARMA PHILIPPINES, INC. is the duly appointed sole and exclusive distributor in the Philippines of DONG-A PHARM, CO. LTD. for its product **BACCHUS ENERGY DRINK in cans.**

Any party other than **DONG-A PHARMA PHILIPPINES, INC.**, purporting, representing, and/or claiming to be a distributor of **BACCHUS ENERGY DRINK** and/or merchandising, marketing, distributing, and selling **BACCHUS ENERGY DRINK** packed in any other form (i.e. bottled, etc.) is NOT duly authorized by DONG-A PHARM, CO. LTD. and/or **DONG-A PHARMA PHILIPPINES, INC.**

The general public is, thus, warned against any other party unlawfully representing itself as an authorized distributor of **BACCHUS ENERGY DRINK** in the Philippines and **BACCHUS ENERGY DRINK** sold in the Philippines other than in canned form (i.e. bottled, etc.).

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(PDI--Feb. 5, 2007)

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• 3rd Engr	from US$2,640.-	10 mos. Contract
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• C/Cook	from US$1,378.- to US$1,486.-	10 mos. Contract
• Ck/B (AB/Ck)	from US$1,067.-	10 mos. Contract
• Bosun/Fitter	from US$1,105.- to US$1,213.-	10 mos. Contract
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NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that PHIL. GOLD PROCESSING AND REFINING CORP. with office address located on the 3rd Floor, Corinthian Plaza Bldg., 121 Paseo de Roxas, Legaspi Village, Makati City, is applying for registration with the Board of Investment (BOI) as New Producer of Gold and Silver Doré on a Non-Pioneer Status with a capacity of 4 million tons of ore or equivalent to 164,000 oz. of Gold and 71,000 oz. of silver with project/plant site located in Puro, Aroroy, Masbate.

Any person with valid objection/s on the above-mentioned project may file his/her objection in writing, under oath, with the BOI within three (3) days from the date of this publication.

(Sgd.) RUDY B. CAÑA
Director
Project Evaluation and Registration Department

(PDI--Feb. 5, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
National Electrification Administration
Needed Immediately

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for

FIRST LAGUNA ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (FLECO)
Lumban, Laguna

Qualifications:

- 30-50 YEARS OLD
- Male or Female
- Graduate of Business Administration, Engineering (Electrical, Mechanical, ECE), Accounting, Finance, Management or Behavioral Science
- With Master's Degree or Post-Graduate Degree preferred
- Must have at least five (5) years managerial experience in a utility-related business enterprise
- Computer literate
- Must be willing to relocate with his/her family in Laguna

Starting Salary: P30,000.00

Application forms and additional information maybe obtained from the Institutional Development Department, 6th Floor, NEA Building, NIA Road, Diliman, Quezon City. Deadline for submission of application form is on 20 February 2007.

(Sgd.) EDITA S. BUENO
Administrator

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
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BRANCH 95-QUEZON CITY

IN THE MATTER OF TESTAMENTARY ESTATE OF THE DECEASE JOSE B. DIMSON,

SP. PROC. NO. Q-06-58529

ROBERT P. GARCIA,
Petitioner.

x----------x

ORDER

Notice is hereby given to ROQUETA R. DIMSON and all her children residing at her last known address at No. 10 Magalang Street, East Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City and JUDITCH JOHNSON and her children residing at her last known address at Washington Drive, Sorsogon City to appear before this Court located at Rm. 202, 2nd Floor, Hall of Justice Building, Quezon City Hall Compound, Quezon City on February 22, 2007 at 8:30 o'clock in the morning and show cause why the petition filed by the petitioner for the allowance of a Holographic Will of deceased Jose B Dimson dated April 7, 1993 shall not be granted. Otherwise, the Court will allow the petitioner and his counsel to present witnesses in support of the will.

SO ORDERED.

Quezon City, Philippines, January 19, 2007.

(Sgd.) HENRI JEAN-PAUL B. INTING
Presiding Judge

(PDI - Feb. 5, 2007)

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

Notice is hereby given that Mr. MENDEL A. NOCHE whose picture appears above is no longer connected with GENCARS, INC. - Isuzu, Makati, Batangas, San Pablo, Legaspi and Lemery effective January 26, 2007. Any transaction entered into by the said person will not be honored by the company after the said date.

(PDI - Feb. 5, 2007)

Tourism department eyes Korea's high-yield market

AFTER POSTING PHENOMENAL growth in foreign arrivals for the past three consecutive years, the Department of Tourism (DOT) is, this time, zeroing in on the high-yield market to sustain the record volume of incoming tourists and further raise the country's dollar revenues, particularly from Korea.

This was revealed by DOT Secretary Joseph Ace H. Durano, citing another unprecedented increase in Korean arrivals that soared to 572,133 in 2006 and accounted for over a fifth of the total volume.

"Moreover, we want to take advantage of the additional capacity of regular and additional charter flights from Korea, raising total available airline seats for 2007 to 737,880 or just a little over the 650,000 target arrivals of the DOT's Team Korea for this year," Durano said.

The flights from Korea include those of the Philippine Airlines, Korean Air, Cebu Pacific, Asiana Airlines, Air Macau, and Asian Spirit.

To achieve its 650,000 target arrivals this year, however, Team Korea will have to reinvigorate the Philippine brand and sustain its market visibility, both in media and travel trade and consumer events.

Team Korea head Maricon Basco-Ebron said trade fairs, business missions, industry presentations, and sales pitches had been lined for the entire year of 2007.

"The same is true with our consumer events that cater to high-end holiday seekers (office ladies), honeymooners, students, sports buffs and special interest groups, and the meetings and incentives market," Ebron added.

Nonetheless, the required marketing communications strategy calls for the retention of the logo and the "7,100: More than you can imagine" slogan.

Both the logo (a scenic cube) and the slogan create a visual idiom of a multi-dimensional Philippines with 7,100 islands and activities available to foreign tourists.

The strategic shift in the campaign, however, is in the choice of media and the increase in online advertising, both geared primarily to the high-end segment of the market.

Print and broadcast ads will be focused on family, honeymooners, special interest groups and golfers.

Nonetheless, the print ads will also cater to single ladies and traders.

"There will also be familiarization trips for Korean media and frontline specialists, launch and maintenance of our new website, and many other promotional activities, including brand and market development studies and research," Ebron pointed out.

This early, DOT's new campaign has drawn the support of newly elected president Shin Joong-mok of the Korean Tourism Association (KTA).

Shin told some 200 guests in the appreciation party for the KTA and the Korean travel trade community that he would continue to pursue cooperative endeavors in tourism to help support the DOT's Team Korea.

KTA's support contributed significantly to the success of DOT's Team Korea in posting the 572,133 Korean arrivals last year.

That made Korea the Philippines' top source of foreign tourists, accounting for over 20 percent of the total in 2006.

"To increase Korean arrivals even further, the DOT will endeavor to strengthen the bond between our governments and widen the areas of cooperation between our peoples," Durano said as he lauded the inflow of Korean investments in the country's tourism industry.

MINOLA HOLDS FIRST NATIONAL SALES CONGRESS

The first national sales congress of Minola Cooking Oil dubbed 'Super Kita sa Super Minola' was held recently at the Hotel-Intercontinental Manila. Distributors from all over the country attended the milestone event, which was highlighted by the presentation of Minola's marketing programs. Financial opportunities for Minola business partners were also underscored in the well-attended conference. San Pablo Manufacturing Corp (SPMC) president Danilo Coronacion and VP for domestic marketing Dr. Tony Concepcion, along with other company officials, were on hand to welcome the distributors. The 2-day congress was aimed to expand the distribution network of Minola Cooking Oil and spur growth for the brand. SPMC marketing and sales executives were also introduced to the distributors during the program proper. 'Super Kita sa Super Minola' came on the heels of the highly successful 'Sarap Manalo, Sarap Minola' nationwide consumer text promo of Minola Cooking Oil. Shown are distributors for Bicol region (standing from left): Rey Blas, VP for finance; Eva Chua, AVP for CMU; lawyer Jun Nario, VP for corporate service; Dr. Tony Concepcion, VP for sales and marketing; Jabe Cabardo, national sales manager. Seated, from left, are Lilibeth Fundales, owner, ACC Trading; Rolli Chua, general manager, Magic 24; Pedro Baluyot, general manager, Kryll's Marketing; Danilo Coronacion, president and CEO, CIIF, Noel Fundales, owner, ACC Trading; and Randolph Zuñiga, ASM for Bicol region.

Pitoy Moreno holds fashion show Feb 8

THE ROTARY CLUB OF PARAÑAQUE-SOUTHeast, AIM Conference Center Manila (ACCM), and the Archdiocesan Shrine of Nuestra Sra. De Guia present the "Philippine Costumes & Inspirations", a cultural and fashion presentation showcasing the timeless elegance of Filipino couture. It will be highlighted by the Filipiniana collection of renowned Filipino couturier Jose "Pitoy" Moreno on Feb. 8 at the Rizal Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La Hotel. This will be the first time that three equally enthused allies will join hands for a worthwhile cause. The proceeds of the show will benefit the first-ever Mobile Soup Kitchen (for RC Parañaque-Southeast and ACCM) and the Carillon Bell (for the Archdiocesan Shrine of Nuestra Sra. De Guia). For tickets and inquiries, call Cham (867-3901), Amy (0906-3764825), Glo (0918-9157674), or Demi (0917-8973008).

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Net borrowings drop by 54%

₱544.3B in old debts paid

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT'S net borrowings last year reached only P107.9 billion, 54 percent lower than year-ago level, as it aggressively pursued debt reduction efforts.

Net borrowing is the difference between the gross liabilities incurred for a period and the amount of previously obtained obligations settled.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that of the P107.9 billion worth of net borrowings last year, foreign debts accounted for P118.6 billion. Some P10.6 billion in net domestic borrowings were recorded.

According to the DOF data, gross borrowings last year amounted to P652.2 billion while debts that were paid in the same period reached P544.3 billion. The bulk of the borrowings was used to pay existing obligations.

The P544.3 billion spent by the government to pay off liabilities was 44 percent higher than the P379.1 billion recorded in 2005.

The Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) last year engaged in debt swaps in line with the government's debt and liability management strategy. Under a debt swap, the government obtains fresh borrowings with lower interest and use them to settle more expensive debts incurred earlier.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said the debt swaps were a prudent exercise as it helped the government save on borrowing cost. He said the government saved about P18 billion last year from the reduced cost of borrowings brought about by the debt swaps.

In the meantime, the BTr last year posted an income of P73.9 billion, exceeding its target of P51.9 billion.

The BTr's income is composed of earnings from investments in dollar-denominated securities and the dividends collected from state-owned firms.

Cruz said that aside from engaging in debt swaps to lower the cost of government borrowings, the BTr also strengthened the monitoring of dividends remittances by state-owned firms.

THE 16-PERCENT projected increase in the value of stocks this year pales in comparison to last year's 42 percent. AP

UBS sees muted market growth in '07

By Daxim L. Lucas

PHILIPPINE STOCKS REMAIN attractive and are expected to rise further this year, although not to the extent seen in 2006, according to a major market player.

In a press briefing, UBS chief country representative Lauro Baja III said his firm was "very optimistic" on the country's macroeconomic numbers despite the uncertainties posed by the upcoming national elections.

"We see the yearend (stock exchange) index at 3,800," he said.

UBS' target represents a 16-percent average increase in the value of local stocks tallied on the Philippine Stock Exchange index (PSEi) from last Friday's close of 3,269.18 points.

This year's expected increase, however, pales in comparison to the 42-percent rise experienced by the broad market in 2006, as the government's successful fiscal reforms made investors take notice of the local economy's resurgence.

Despite expectations of a 'muted' 2007, Baja said foreign fund managers would continue flocking to the country's financial system, especially the equities market.

"Investors continue to favor the Philippines," he said. "They like our macro story."

Baja heads the local operations of UBS Investment Bank—a unit of Swiss banking giant UBS AG—and its brokerage firm, which posted the second-largest value of trades on the PSE last year.

Having underwritten three large stock transactions in January alone—mainly by pitching local stocks to its foreign clients—UBS is keenly interested in helping buttress the local stock market against selling by investors who may want to cash in last year's gains.

Apart from having underwritten the P5.9-billion share offer of Filinvest Land Inc., UBS was also chosen to handle the placement of $124 million worth of treasury shares sold by Aboitiz Equity Ventures, as well as a $53-million "selldown" by a large foreign stockholder of First Gen Corp.

Baja said "strong demand" marked the Aboitiz deal.

"It was successful despite the market's sharp correction [two weeks ago]," he said. "Investors are still hungry for Philippine paper."

According to officials of the foreign brokerage, the only possible factor that may dampen the market in the foreseeable future is the upcoming national elections in May, which may cause some worry particularly over government spending.

Most market watchers, however, have already factored in this possibility in their investment decisions. In fact, some increase in infrastructure spending will be welcomed by foreign investors since the move would help pump prime the economy.

Greenfield AutoPark

Steering towards the future of business

Nurturing and contributing to the burgeoning local manufacturing and light industry business growth is the Greenfield AutoPark (GAP), a sprawling 65-hectare industrial park located within the pioneering Greenfield City at Santa Rosa, Laguna. The industrial estate is the home of Ford Motor Company in the Philippines, still it aims to become a strategic base of manufacturing plants, telecommunication, information technology and other light industry firms.

Greenfield AutoPark's vast area is perfectly suited for such major industrial and manufacturing companies with its world-class, superior infrastructure and communication facilities. Its prime ideal location within the masterplanned community of Greenfield City places Greenfield AutoPark within the country's new and vital growth center of Sta. Rosa. It is accessible to major transportation routes through 3 major road networks in the south: Sta. Rosa Exit, Mamplasan, and ABI-Greenfield Interchange.

Its strategic location also means close proximity to business support facilities such as the bustling Paseo de Santa Rosa commercial complex and other commercial centers, telecommunication facilities, financial institutions, and even educational and academic centers. Greenfield AutoPark itself is a pristine, eco-friendly environment, existing in harmony with nearby residential areas, hospitals, hotels, and community amenities.

Most importantly, locators at Greenfield AutoPark are granted incentives from the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA), assuring valuable financial and operational support for these firms. The continued growth of the economy rests on the sustainability of both multinational and homegrown industries providing countless jobs to Filipino workers, and with the escalating growth of manufacturing, assembly operations, and light industries in Greenfield AutoPark, it is definitely the location of choice for the future of business in the Philippines.

For more information on Greenfield AutoPark and Greenfield Development Corporation, please call 53-GREEN (47336), email sales@greenfield.com.ph or log on to www.greenfield.com.ph.

ADVT.

BUSINESS Monday

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Website: www.inquirer.net/business
Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

Survey shows RP business confidence high

Philippines can be 'heart' of Asia, P & A says

By Amy R. Remo

AS 2007 USHERS IN, LOCAL BUSINESS owners have become more optimistic with their outlook on the country's economic prospects, due mainly to the Philippines' strong light industries and services.

According to initial findings from the Grant Thornton International Business Report (IBR), formerly called International Business Outlook Survey (Ibos), the Philippines ranks second among 30 major world economies in terms of optimism on the economy over the next 12 months.

The IBR, an annual poll which covers the opinions of about 7,200 business leaders in 32 countries, was released by accounting and tax advisory firm Punongbayan & Araullo, the Philippine member firm of Grant Thorton International.

The survey examines the attitudes, plans and trends among business owners.

Optimism level on the Philippines' economy has significantly strengthened to +88 percent from last year's +70 percent. This figure is the percentage balance of the respondents who are optimistic less those who are pessimistic.

Another significant factor behind this confident outlook is the upsurge in the Philippine stock market index (Phisix), which experienced 40-percent increase in 2006 alone, outperforming all key Asian bourses except that of Jakarta's.

India (+97 percent), Mainland China (+85 percent) and Singapore (+84 percent) join the country in the top four positions in the survey.

According to Tony Herbosa, principal for corporate finance of P&A, the dominance of Asian countries in the optimism survey is clearly indicative of the countries that are best positioned to be competitive in the face of increasing globalization.

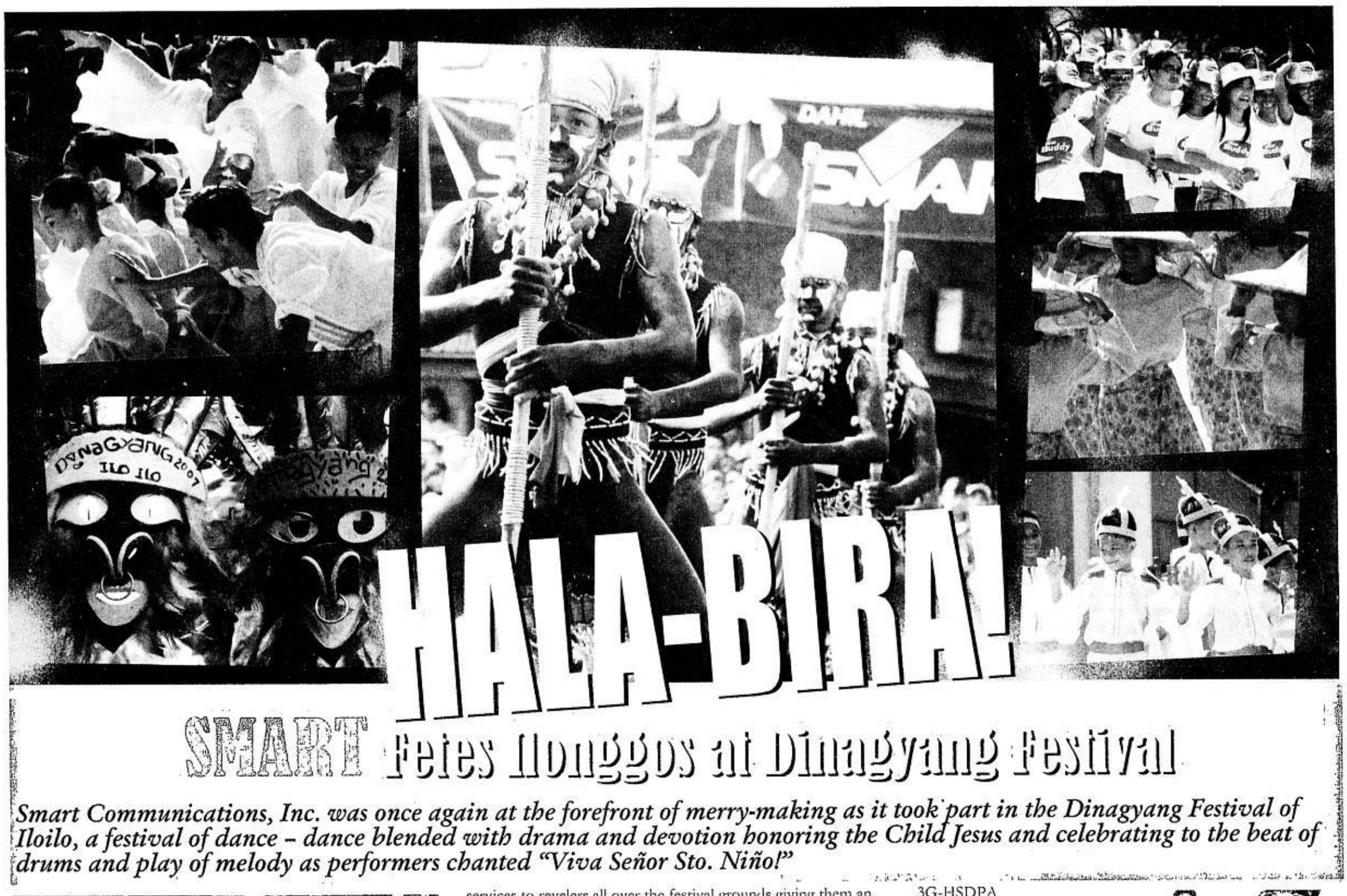
As early as 2005, in a roadshow entitled "Philippines in Transition: New Business Models," Herbosa has already outlined the roles that India, Philippines and China would play in the global market.

"I restated Peter Drucker's position before his demise: that China will be the 'brawns' of Asia and that India will be the 'brains,' with its lock on high-end outsourcing and programming," says Herbosa.

"I see the Philippines as positioned to be the 'heart' of Asia, with strengths in EQ-driven services—hence, our exportation of caregivers, teachers, artists and chefs," he explains. "This is also why we are now in a good position to market ourselves to medical tourists and retirees."

Herbosa adds: "Although the exportation of labor in the global market was initially difficult since we had to position

SURVEY/ B2-3



SMART Fetes Ilonggos at Dinagyang Festival

Smart Communications, Inc. was once again at the forefront of merry-making as it took part in the Dinagyang Festival of Iloilo, a festival of dance – dance blended with drama and devotion honoring the Child Jesus and celebrating to the beat of drums and play of melody as performers chanted "Viva Señor Sto. Niño!"

SMART BRO brings festival revelers free Internet

Revelers painted themselves black in the spirit of celebration, reminiscent of Iloilo's original inhabitants, the aetas of Panay, and their subsequent conversion to Christianity. Their tar-painted skin was an arresting sight against the splash of color from g-strings and costumes made out of indigenous materials like woven anahaw leaves, barks and coconut palm fronds.

Smart was in the thick of festivities, supporting nearly all the participating tribes in the Ati-Atihan competition. Each performing tribe made its Dinagyang mark giving their all in honoring the Sto. Niño through colorful props and costumes, passionate dance choreography and blissful themes well delivered to the amazed crowd. First runner up winner Tribu Paghidaet of La Paz National High School proudly wore the Smart Buddy colors as they wowed the crowd with their energetic performance.

Smart also made sure the Dinagyang weekend was packed with special promos, gimmicks and the latest in mobile technology and connectivity as it offered its products and services to revelers all over the festival grounds giving them an extra touch of enjoyment and fun during their Dinagyang experience. The SMART Buddy SIM for example, went for as low as P90 with a free P12 Pwede card. Locals also enjoyed Lahat Text 35 and 20 and the All Talk 10 special Iloilo package, which allowed prepaid subscribers to make 3 calls of up to 3 minutes each for only P10.

SMART volunteer-employees give a helping hand

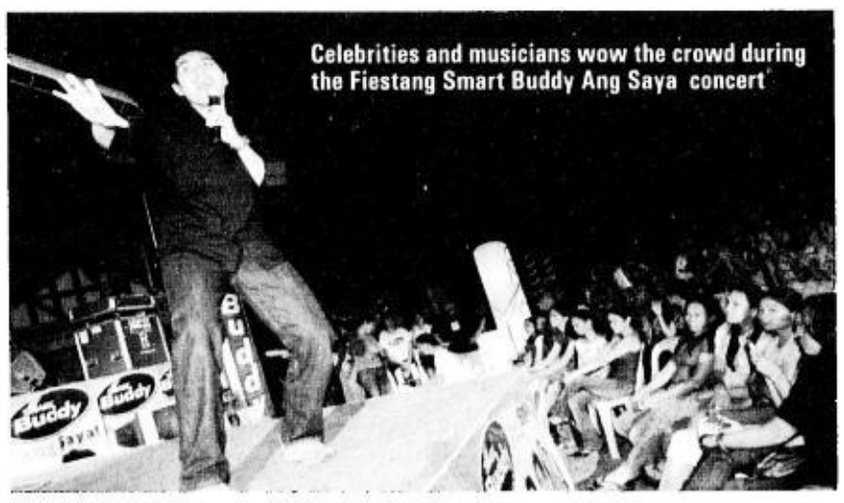
SMART also gave the crowds another reason to celebrate through Smart BRO – the telecom giant's wireless broadband service. Booths were placed everywhere giving people a chance to surf the web for free as they enjoyed the fiesta. The number of festival-spectators expanded beyond Iloilo City since the weekend event was documented via web cameras and broadcasted over the Internet making the Dinagyang experience more memorable than ever. Smart subscribers with 3G-capable phones also took their part in spreading the scenes by availing of Smart's video streaming service.

Ilonggos also sampled Smart's newest service, the high-speed downlink packet access (HSDPA) through a booth setup at the Sarabia Manor. Subscribers on the parade route enjoyed strong 3G-HSDPA coverage all over the major streets of Iloilo City. Smart also launched a promo offering the new 3G-HSDPA-capable phone, the Motorola V3XX, free under Smart Gold Plan 2500. Those who subscribe to a Smart Infinity Plan 5000 or 8000 until April 15 also get a chance to win a sunset cruise to Boracay in a raffle.

Passionate faces smear the fiesta grounds as SMART adds color to Dinagyang

Smart went beyond everyone's expectations as they put together the *Fiestang Smart Buddy Ang Saya* concert hosted by actor Epy Quizon which was a highlight of the Dinagyang weekend. The show featured popular musical performers Hale, Sugarfree, and Philippine Idol runner-up Gian Magdangal who performed amazingly as fans and crowds gathered to cheer and applaud the artists taking the spotlight. The crowd further rejoiced as SMART raffled out thrilling prizes such as appliances, mobile phones and other premium items definitely putting the icing on the cake.

"Cooperation among all the groups involved was the key to the success of Dinagyang," said Iloilo Dinagyang Foundation Executive Director Ben Jimena. "We really appreciate SMART's contribution in helping us make the Dinagyang Festival live up to the distinction of being the best tourism event in the Philippines, as acknowledged by the Association of Tourism Operators in the country. SMART has been supporting the Dinagyang Festival for so many years already. This kind of support has helped us give the Dinagyang Festival the kind of national recognition it now enjoys."



Celebrities and musicians wow the crowd during the Fiestang Smart Buddy Ang Saya concert

Eager customers avail of SMART's enticing promos, products and services

Nagkakaisa sa pagbibigay ng serbisyong tunay.

Why are we always lacking in national unity?

Can a western democracy solve the economic problems of a poor nation?

MAPPING THE FUTURE

Washington Z. SyCip

JUST OVER 57 YEARS AGO, THE GREAT civic and business leader of the Philippines, Monching del Rosario, asked me to join him in organizing the Management Association of the Philippines. I cannot decline an invitation when another distinguished diplomat and business leader, Ambassador Bert del Rosario asked me to speak on what MAP as an organization and MAP members as individuals can do to help improve the economic and social condition of our country.

Since most of you are professional managers, I thought I can be frank—and maybe too frank and naive—in my remarks today which will be in a series of questions where I may not have the answers.

We are off to a good start in 2007. International confidence in the Philippines has improved, budget deficit and interest rates are down, inflation is under control, the stock market, business profits and foreign exchange reserves are up. As a result of these favorable factors and, with the weakness of the dollar, the peso, together with other currencies, has strengthened.

Aside from consumer goods and tuition fees, remittances from Filipinos abroad are increasing and are now going into apartments and houses. This, together with the office space requirements of "outsourcing" companies, have created a minor boom in construction.

GNP growth rates in 2006 were satisfactory but, as in the US, the upper income and better educated citizens have benefited more in 2006 than the bottom group.

Credit should go to President Macapagal-Arroyo in being willing to push through economic measures that may not add to popularity! With the major Chinese financed infrastructure and agricultural projects signed last week, there is reasonable hope that, in the next four years, economic growth can seep down to the bottom group of our society. The success stories of China's fight against poverty, without lectures from Westerners on democracy, may usher in new ideas for our politicians and our NGOs.

With the present optimism, we must not lose sight of the unresolved problems that have plagued our country for the past 50 years.

Our political, business and social leaders have discussed endlessly our problems and proposed short term and painless solutions that are widely publicized but seldom implemented. In spite of attempts to reform the judicial process, we all know that the country is not known for speedy justice or quick punishment for wrongdoing. For the past 40 years, the common complaint of both domestic and foreign investors is "lack of transparency" in transactions involving the bureaucracy. The media, sometimes free and wise, sometimes captive and illogical, further adds to the confusion.

Kishore Mahbubani, former Singapore ambassador to the United Nations, who now heads the Lee Kuan Yew school for public policy, in a recent interview said: "Take the rule of law: no segment of society, especially the rich and powerful elite, should be immune from the rule of law. Asian societies have the external trappings of modernity: a parliament, courts, but the culture is very feudal. One of the saddest cases in Southeast Asia is the Philippines. On the surface, the Philippines is openly democratic, but culturally, it's still very feudal, with a few families still controlling the wealth of the country. The people at the very bottom have no avenue to grow and develop except to go overseas and work as foreign workers."

Roots of the problem

Are we refusing to see the unpleasant roots of our problem? As the leading managers of our country, let me raise these questions with you:

1. About 50 years ago most of Asia and the Western world thought that the Philippines, as the only Christian and democratic developing nation in this region, would forge ahead of our neighbors, with only Japan ahead of us! We were the most promising nation in East Asia.

If the success of a poor nation is judged by its being able to reduce poverty, improve education, provide decent health care and housing for most of our people, then we have miserably failed as compared to our neighbors.

With a talented and intelligent population, we see widening economic gaps between the rich and the poor, declining standards of education, a fairly constant poverty rate, and outward migration of the young to what they see as countries that have more opportunities for them.

What are the roots of our problem? Is it an overdose of democracy, Western style? When poor citizens sell their votes, do we not have a democracy of the upper class who have the money to buy the votes?

Economic freedom with effective enforcement of laws and long term planning for needed infrastructure has been the success story of East Asia. Political freedom gradually increased as income levels rose. The widely praised four "tiger economies" of Asia all had authoritarian governments that were able to eliminate hunger and increased spending on education. Elements of democracy came naturally with a growing middle-class.

Taiwan's growth was under martial law and South Korea developed under a military dictatorship. Prosperous Hong Kong and Singapore do not seem to be suffering from a lack of democracy. In fact both westerners and Asians admire the discipline of Singapore!

I want to make it clear that I am for democracy but food, education, housing and health care for the poor should have first priority. Compare the Philippines with the US presidential system, and India with the British parliamentary system, with our neighbors and China. Both the Philippines and India are way behind in infrastructure—water, power, highways, airports, etc. India, in spite of Bangalore and Hyderabad, is way behind China in literacy rate, life span of its people, calorie intake, per capita income and any other economic indicator you can think of!

The Philippines was once ahead of our neighbors. Now we are behind Taiwan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, all of whom had not blindly followed the western model of development which puts its emphasis on political freedom.

Vietnam, certainly not a Western democracy, may pass us this year. Indonesia's per capita income has declined after three weak presidents elected under a democracy praised by the West!

I ask you—has Western democracy been an asset or liability for poor nations in this region?

2. As you know, the success and failure of your organization depends on your human resource policies—how you hire your people, how you motivate them, how you train them and how you choose leadership. Isn't this also true of a nation?

You are probably aware of the declining per capita spending in our public schools—1/6 of Malaysia and 1/11 of Singapore. Are you not worried about public schools without desks and books with poorly paid school teachers?

Only a few of our dedicated teachers can be recognized by Metrobank's annual search for outstanding teachers. While scholarships to the poor are needed, should we not also donate to funds that will improve teaching? Should we not ask students from wealthy families to pay full cost tuition at state educational institutions where parking space for cars is often the problem?

Should we not encourage churches to be used as school houses in towns where many public schools have no chairs and even no books? Should law schools not be replaced by engineering schools?

Another Del Rosario, Ramon Jr., recently organized the Philippine Business for Education, to focus on the problems of education. Should all of us, the private sector and government, not spend more time and money on education?

Neglecting the many problems of education, of high dropout rates, poor teaching of Math, Science and English is like slowly committing national suicide! But can we solve our education problem, which affects your future and your children's future, without checking population growth? And isn't this also tied up with the problem of improving health among the poor?

3. Only recently you saw figures that our population has reached 88 million and where new jobs are behind population growth. In spite of more job-seekers going abroad, our unemployed and underemployed continue to increase. The population explosion cannot be taken care of by the school system and by our poor infrastructure.

Paeng Salas, who could have been a Philippine Lee Kuan Yew, was greatly respected for his work at the UN on managing population

WHY/B2-3

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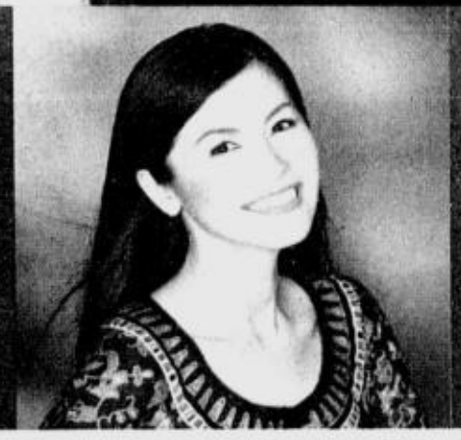

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+1 arrives the next day. SilkAir flights from Cebu and Davao connect conveniently with this new service. Above schedule subject to changes.

Survey shows ...

From page B2-1

away from manufacturing, it is our natural niche. Remittances from our overseas workers are now fueling growth in light industries, schools, BPOs and call centers, basic services, affordable consumption and lately, mid-level or affordable properties."

Based on a trend data, optimism in the Philippines has been rising steadily.

When the Philippines first participated in the IBR in 2004, business owners were slightly pessimistic with a balance of -1 percent due partly to the country's flagging electronics sector.

In the following year however, the Philippines posted a +50 percent balance, as local business owners reported a remarkable surge in confidence in the economy. This percentage was even higher than the global average then of +41 percent.

Although the country's growth then was modest compared to its Asian neighbors, the Philippines' GDP growth for the three years leading to 2005 saw a perceptible acceleration.

This year, the Philippines enjoys a favorable rating and a higher outlook than some of its Asian neighbors like Hong Kong (+69 percent), Malaysia (+38 percent), Thailand (+30 percent) and Taiwan (-3 percent).

This upward climb is expected to continue well into the next 12 months as the Philippines again shares the upper tier of extremely optimistic countries.

Overall, the IBR shows that businesses in 29 out of 32 countries are optimistic about their economy's performance in 2007 with 24 being more optimistic than last year.

And while Asia continues to be the driver of global confidence, for the first time in its five-year history, the optimism/pessimism league table shows the European Union (EU), at a balance of +46 percent, to be more optimistic than the US, at a balance of +14 percent.

According to the report, the findings reflect the growing confidence of EU economies in the past year, in particular Germany +66 percent (+41 percent in 2006), France +30 percent (+1 percent in 2006) and Italy +21 percent (-8 percent in 2006).

The annual IBR conducted by international membership organization Grant Thornton began in 2002, building on the European Business Survey, which it ran from 1993 to 2001. The research was conducted by Experian Business Strategies Ltd. and Harris Interactive.

What SM does beyond the walls of its malls

By Margie Quimpo-Espino

HISTORY HAS SHOWN THAT after material successes in life, some men and women go to the next level of their lives, which is payback time.

Of course there are others like Anita Roddick of The Body Shop, who capitalized on their social causes to grow their business from day one.

But for many successful people, the last rung of the success ladder is giving back to society some of the wealth and successes it has given them.

For taipan Henry Sy, builder of the vast SM empire, payback time started over 20 years ago in 1983 when he set up the SM Foundation.

Except for a few press releases, the foundation has been low profile compared to others.

Foundation officials, however, say awareness of their activities is much higher in the provinces than in Metro Manila.

The foundation provides help to several sectors: Education, health, mall-based outreach and the religious.

There is only one criteria for their education programs—that these be given to communities where SM malls or supercenters are.

At any given time, it has 500 college scholars. Since it started in 1993, the SM College Scholarship program has produced 798 college graduates in engineering, computer and information technology, accounting and the academe. Some of the graduates are employed by SM firms, others are working abroad.

TAIPAN Henry Sy and wife Felicidad always attend the graduation of their scholars.

Each scholar is given free tuition, and school fees, and monthly allowance.

In a country where only 20 out of 98 fourth year high school students go to college, the foundation's contribution is significant.

Two of the foundation's board of trustees members—Linda Atayde and Connie Angeles—recently met with the INQUIRER to talk about their work. They say they feel it's time for the SM Foundation to trumpet some of its works as the Sy empire has received criticisms about not helping society.

With Henry Sy himself chairing the foundation and eldest daughter Tessie Sy as one of the members, its directors admit the foundation is well supported by the owners.

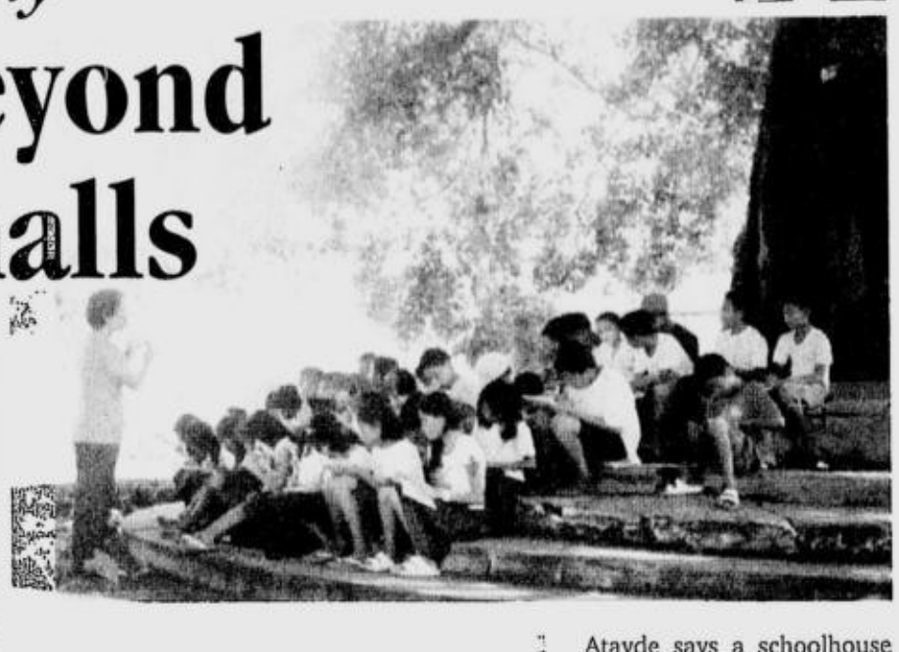
Atayde says one percent of the profits of each SM company goes to the foudnation, "so we have no problem with funding."

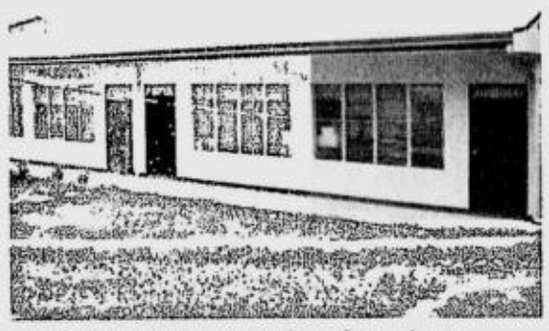
Over the past 14 years, Henry Sy and wife Felicidad make it a point to attend every graduation of the scholars who come from NCR, Baguio, Batangas, Lucena, Laguna, Cavite, Pampanga, Bulacan, Cebu, Iloilo, Bacolod, Davao, Cagayan de Oro—the sites of SM malls all over the country. SM has 50 partner schools for the scholars.

To qualify, scholars must come from public high schools, have average grades of at least 88 percent during the second or third grading period, with combined household income of at most P150,000 per year. (Application for school year 2007-2008 is now open. Forms can be obtained from the customer service counters of SM department stores.)

Another aspect of their education program is the Schoolbuilding Program which is a response to the Department of Education's Adopt-a-School Program. To date, the foundation has donated 16 two-classroom SM Schoolhouses to 16 public elementary schools.

The target this year is to build 10 schoolhouses.





TOP shows before and after photos how students held classes before SM built a schoolhouse.

Atayde says a schoolhouse with two classrooms and two toilets costs some P800,000.

For its outreach program, Connie Angeles says the foundation adopts four themes and taps the malls as drop-off points for the donations. For the first quarter, its Share your Extras. Under this, SM shoppers are encouraged to donate their "extras" such as clothes, food, furniture, housewares, etc. that can still be used by poor families. The program is eight years old and has assisted 341,000 individuals in 51 provinces.

For the second quarter, the theme is Donate-a-Book, aimed at augmenting the DepEd's book shortage in public schools. The malls provide kiosks for shoppers to give their books. This project started in 1997.

Gamot para sa Kapwa is the theme for the third quarter. It solicits unopened and not expired medicine from shoppers and drug companies.

For the Christmas quarter, the theme is Make a child happy, share a toy. This nine-year-old project has generated 132,944 toys.

Why are we ...

From page B2-2

and economic growth. The world followed him—except his own country. Why can a man of integrity and great competence not find a place in the Philippine political setting?

Government data shows that poor families have more children than middle or upper income families.

4. Tony Meloto and Gawad Kalinga are doing what they can to solve housing and social problems of the poor. Phinma and others have shown that housing projects for the lower income groups can be financially successful by organizing the communities to help themselves. In spite of these efforts, the slums in Metro Manila such as those on Araneta Avenue continue to grow. Why have other governments been more successful in clearing slums and providing public housing for the poor?

5. The former Indian ambassador told me that there are about 20,000 to 25,000 Indians involved in the 5/6 business. This does not include local people in this profitable activity. At 20 percent interest a week or 1,000 percent a year, it is very unlikely that a poor borrower can emerge from poverty. Microfinance units drop interest rates in the communities they serve but a much more rapid expansion of microfinance is needed to help the poor. Are income taxes being collected from the motorcycle riding 5/6 people? Is their Philippine presence legal? Are you helping microfinancing activities in the country?

Marcos had a brilliant mind. The first two years (1973 and 1974) of what was described as "smiling martial law" saw the highest growth rates that the Philippines had ever experienced. Except for Singapore, corruption was also present in all our neighbors. Why did Marcos fail when other less gifted authoritarian leaders in East Asia were successful?

Why are we always lacking in national unity? Is it because we are an island nation with a Latin heritage that may be more at home among the Caribbean islands?

Can a western democracy solve the economic problems of a poor nation with a per capita income of about $1,500? Should we have an Asian model of democracy where economic and education matters are delegated to a group of technocrats that are insulated from politics? Can we expect an elected congress of politicians to respond to the rapid economic changes taking place in a flat world? After all, an independent central bank, with little interference from politicians, seems to work quite well for our banking system.

Should we not have one man one vote only in smaller political units like the barrios where there is greater transparency and where accountability is readily established? This was what US President Carter suggested when Deng Xiao Ping asked him about democracy for China. Why should we follow our present model of national elections requiring heavy election spending? Can poor countries with western democracy produce the type of leadership that is necessary to solve long-term economic and poverty problems?

As my friends know, I have always been optimistic about the country but a bit impatient about the slowness of changes needed to reduce poverty. I agree with the forecast of President Arroyo and many reputable investment bankers, both domestic and foreign, that 2007 may be a banner year for the country.

Aside from the long-term measures that we have to take, can we learn some lessons from Ireland? Like the Philippines, it is a deeply religious Catholic country with sharp political divisions that made it one of the poorest countries of Western Europe, with a large outflow of its talented and light hearted people to the US and UK. To quote from a conference board agenda the question at that time was, how could Ireland manage a "dramatic shift in social and economic goals heavily influenced by the Catholic Church to an economic and political framework that promotes growth and development."

At a meeting with the Irish prime minister in June 2005, I was told that after business groups, politicians, church and labor leaders agreed on national objectives, investments increased, per capita income surged past that of the other European countries, and this growth has been sustained. Irish migrants returned to their native land to further contribute to the island's prosperity!

Can this be a Philippine scenario? My answer is "yes"—if we have national unity and a common program to reduce poverty and develop a larger middle class!

(Edited speech delivered during the 58th MAP inaugural meeting and induction of 2007 MAP board of governors. The author is founder of SGV Group and the MAP. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

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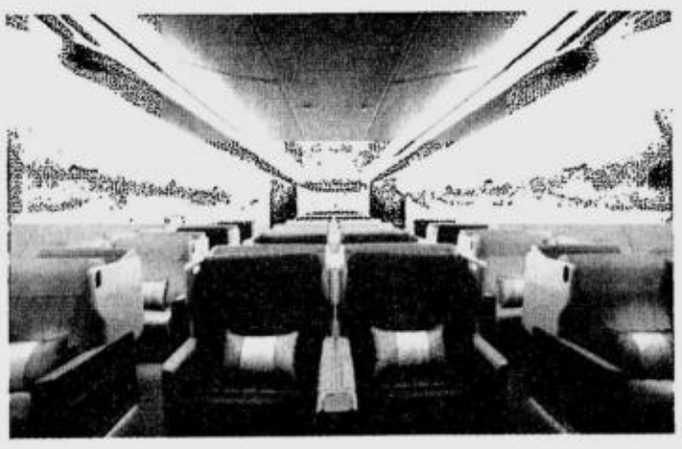

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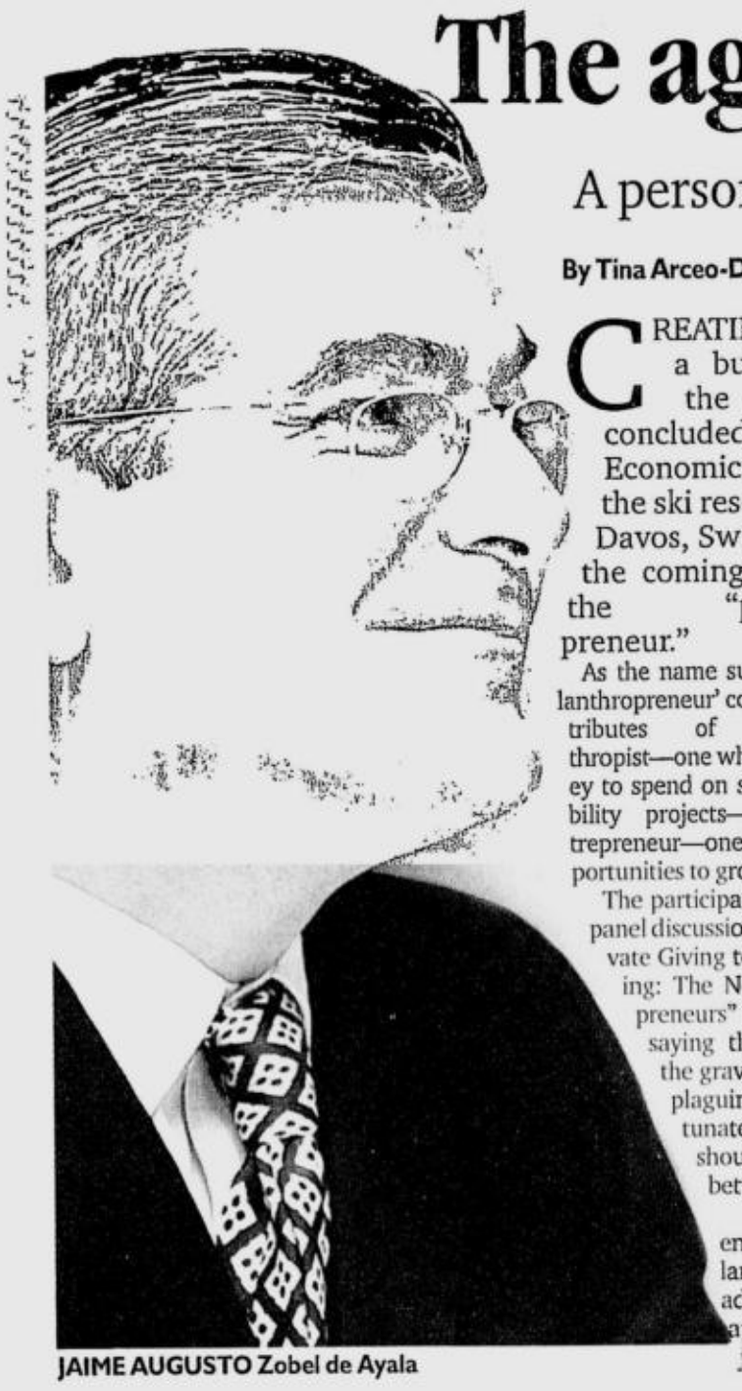
BUSINESS Monday

The age of the 'philanthropreneur'

A person with money and conscience who continues to tap opportunities



JAIME AUGUSTO Zobel de Ayala

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CREATING QUITE a buzz during the recently concluded World Economic Forum in the ski resort town of Davos, Switzerland is the coming of age of the "philanthropreneur."

As the name suggests, a 'philanthropreneur' combines the attributes of a philanthropist—one who has big money to spend on social responsibility projects—and an entrepreneur—one who seizes opportunities to grow ventures.

The participants in the WEF panel discussion on "From Private Giving to Social Investing: The New Philanthropreneurs" were one in saying that because of the gravity of problems plaguing the less fortunate, money should be put to better use.

It's no longer enough for philanthropists to adopt a hands-off approach and just give money, with the thought that it will just find its way to worthy projects.

Instead, there should be a method and a well thought out program to maximize its use and those holding money should be more involved.

Otherwise, the money—no matter how substantial—will go to waste, according to the panelists that included Ayala Corp. chair and CEO Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II.

Sally Osberg, president and CEO of Skoll Foundation based in the United States, said during the discussion that the foundation created in 1999 ensures the effective use of its money by putting its funds behind entrepreneurs who are already successful at bringing positive changes to communities throughout the world.

The foundation's seed money came from Jeff Skoll, co-founder of eBay, one of the world's most successful commercial websites.

Because the foundation does not have the expertise to go directly into the community level, it did the next best thing by funding the ventures of so-called social entrepreneurs, with the objective of helping them extend their reach and deepen their impact.

John M. Templeton Jr., president of the US-based John Templeton Foundation, adopts a similar approach.

Templeton said in an interview that he was in the business of financing companies that have done their share in solving world problems, such as education and AIDS prevention.

"We urge that there should be more emphasis on measuring success," Templeton said, "and that success should come from the grassroots. We have to ask them what projects are necessary to help them."

It's fortunate that the Skoll Foundation and the Templeton Foundation manage to find these social entrepreneurs. Others are not so lucky.

TransFair USA president and CEO Paul Rice said making philanthropists aware of worthy projects to support remained a big challenge faced by social entrepreneurs who just need more money to bring their projects to the next level.

Rice explained that money does come in for projects such as TransFair's campaign to promote fair trade to guarantee that farmers are paid fair, above-market prices for their projects. But projects like these usually hit a funding wall.

"The collective challenge is to unlock capital for social ventures for these to go up to scale," Rice said before a packed crowd at the Hotel National.

Barbara Stocking, director of Oxfam GB, United Kingdom, on the other hand, underscored the need for more accountability on the part of the organizations or companies receiving funds.

Stocking said organizations have to show that funding good projects does bring in results, to encourage philanthropists to continue providing funds.

On the part of corporate foundations, Julio Moura, chair and CEO of GrupoNueva, Chile, said social projects should not be mere accessories to the main business of companies.

Instead, he recommended that these social projects should be part of the core business.

"In issues such as poverty and climate change, business has a role to play to address them," Moura said.

Zobel presented a similar view, arguing that there was an "increasing convergence of corporate social responsibility and business strategy, whereas before they have traditionally operated in parallel and independent paths."

"Businesses are far more capable and well-positioned to catalyze social development given the wealth of talent, managerial caliber and innovative skills available to them that can help spread development," said Zobel, who was recently named Management Man of the Year for 2006.

Zobel cited the examples of Manila Water Co. Inc. and Globe Telecom.

MWCI has a "Water for the Poor" program, which has provided potable water to more than 860,000 residents from various poor communities in its concession area.

Not only was MWCI able to dramatically increase its subscriber base, and increase revenues from the sale of water, it was able to provide a service to communities who used to endure waiting in the wee hours of the morning to get water from the public pump.

Globe Telecom made a similar move when it expanded its subscriber base to include the lower income groups. It also introduced a reseller program where the less fortunate can sell "telecom" minutes to mobile phone users, thus providing them with an extra source of income.

Zobel demonstrated that when the twin motives of social development and profit come together, what's good for business becomes even better for the community.

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I'm 60 and counting

A LEADER'S WAY

John C. Maxwell

(Continued from last week)

Perspective thoughts

1. Life can only be understood backwards, but it must be lived forwards.

2. Look at everything as though you might be seeing it for the first time and the last time.

The "First Time" look provides curiosity, excitement, anticipation, and learning. The "Last Time" look provides gratitude, memories, appreciation and reflection.

3. Separate the important from the unimportant.

4. Laugh at yourself … everyone else is!

5. Giving

George Burns said it well: "When you stop giving and offering something to the rest of the world, it's time to turn out the lights." The worth of our lives comes by what we give. What we keep, we squander. Look for ways to impart value, be generous with encouragement, and hand out hope to those you lead.

6. Legacy

As a leader, when you hit 60, you start to see your legacy being formed. To leave an indelible legacy in the lives around you, I would suggest three activities:

1. Choose today the legacy you want to leave others.

People will summarize your life in one sentence—pick it now! Don't make your friends and family guess at your life's purpose at your funeral.

The forming of my one sentence began late in the 1960s and evolved into my life-sentence today. Here is the sequence:

"I want to be a great pastor."

"I want to be a great communicator."

"I want to be a great writer."

"I want to be a great leader."

As my world expanded my one sentence changed. I looked at my previous statements and realized that my true desire was to not to be great, but to add value to others. For a few years my one sentence was "I want to add value to people."

That statement evolved until I picked one sentence that I hope others will believe about me now and at my death.

"I want to add value to leaders who will multiply value to others."

2. Live today the legacy you want to leave.

Dr. Anthony Campolo tells about a sociological study in which 50 people over the age of 95 were asked one question: "If you could live your life over again, what would you do differently?"

The open-ended question was met with a multiplicity of answers from the respondents, however, three answers emerged to dominate the results of the study:

1. If I had it to do over again, I would reflect more.

2. If I had it to do over again, I would risk more.

3. If I had it to do over again, I would do more things that would live on after I am dead.

3. Appreciate today the value of a good legacy.

A life is short; history is long. Spend your life on pursuits that will outlive you.

Elton Trueblood wrote, "We have made at least a start in discovering the meaning in human life when we plant shade trees under which we know full well we will never sit."

Why is my life compounding?

1. Attitude

The secret of positive compounding is contributing more than consuming.

I approach each day with the attitude that my success is determined by the seeds I sow, not the harvest I reap.

2. Personal Growth

The secret of your success is determined by your daily agenda.

3. Strength Zone

The only way to rise above average is to hone in on areas where you excel.

4. Teamwork

Teamwork makes the dream work. Your success depends upon those closest to you. Inspire a shared vision that binds you together for big dreams and audacious goals.

5. Partnerships

Mother Teresa, one of the greatest leaders of the 20th Century, embraced partnership with these words: "I can do what you cannot do and you can do what I cannot do. Together we can do great things."

6. Credibility

When you consistently combine character with competence, you establish credibility.

Life compounds positively or negatively. The choice is up to you. The age at which you make your choices will determine the magnitude of the compounding.

1. Choices made during youth yield enormous compound interest.

2. Choices made in the middle of life earn a small degree of compound interest.

3. Choices put off until late in life don't have time to compound.

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■ **Mel Gibson's end** of civilization epic/C4

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NEW YEAR'S SHOCK

San Miguel kills orchestra, chorale

SAN MIGUEL Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorale

By Pablo A. Tariman

THE SAN MIGUEL Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorale are dead.

Late last month, instrumentalists of the only corporate-supported orchestra in the country were summoned one by one by the big bosses who informed them of the non-renewal of their contracts.

Ditto with the members of the San Miguel Chorale.

Many of the orchestra and chorale members did not get separation pay.

It is not known what happened to Ryan Cayabyab, the executive director and artistic director of the San Miguel Foundation for the Performing Arts.

Insiders said that San Miguel Corp., the biggest food and beverage company in Southeast Asia, was "more inclined" to support basketball. San Miguel has four basketball teams in the professional league: San Miguel, Ginebra, Coca-cola and Purefoods.

The latest income statement by San Miguel showed the conglomerate is in the utmost pink of health. In November, it reported that its nine-month net income grew 18 percent, to P6.17 billion from P5.22 billion in the same period last year, boosted by its strong local and international beer operations and strong sales by its Australian dairy unit, National Foods Ltd.

Both founded in 2001, the highly promising San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorale were suddenly disbanded early this year while no one was looking.

And no one is expected to drink to that.

RYAN Cayabyab

The food and beverage giant would rather support basketball than the performing arts, insiders say

Rondalla festival

The 2nd International Rondalla Festival reels off in Dumaguete City, Feb. 21-March 31, at the Silliman Hall of the Silliman University. It will feature not only performances but also exhibits highlighting the plucked-string tradition of the Visayas region and the Philippines and sampling of plucked-string instruments from various cultures.

The project is a tie-up between the Musicological Society of the Philippines, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and the province of Negros Oriental headed by arts-friendly Gov. George Arnaiz.

Call 9260028

Romanian violin superstar

Alexandru Tomescu just wrapped up his highly successful European tour with a piano trio.

He will return to Manila to close the Great Performance Series at the Philamlife Theater on Feb. 24, 8 p.m., with pianist Mary Anne Espina.

His Manila concert is a tribute to violinists Redentor Romero, Carmencita Lozada and Ernesto Vallejo—all violin greats of their generation.

Call 9007023 or 0906-5104270.

Return performance

Sensational Russian pianist Ilya Rashkovskiy, who debuted in Manila in December to great audience and media acclaim, will be back April 15 at the Philamlife Theater with an entirely new recital program. Call 9007023 or 09065104270.

War memoirs

The book not to be missed for the New Year is Carmen Guerrero Nakpil's autobiography "Myself, Elsewhere."

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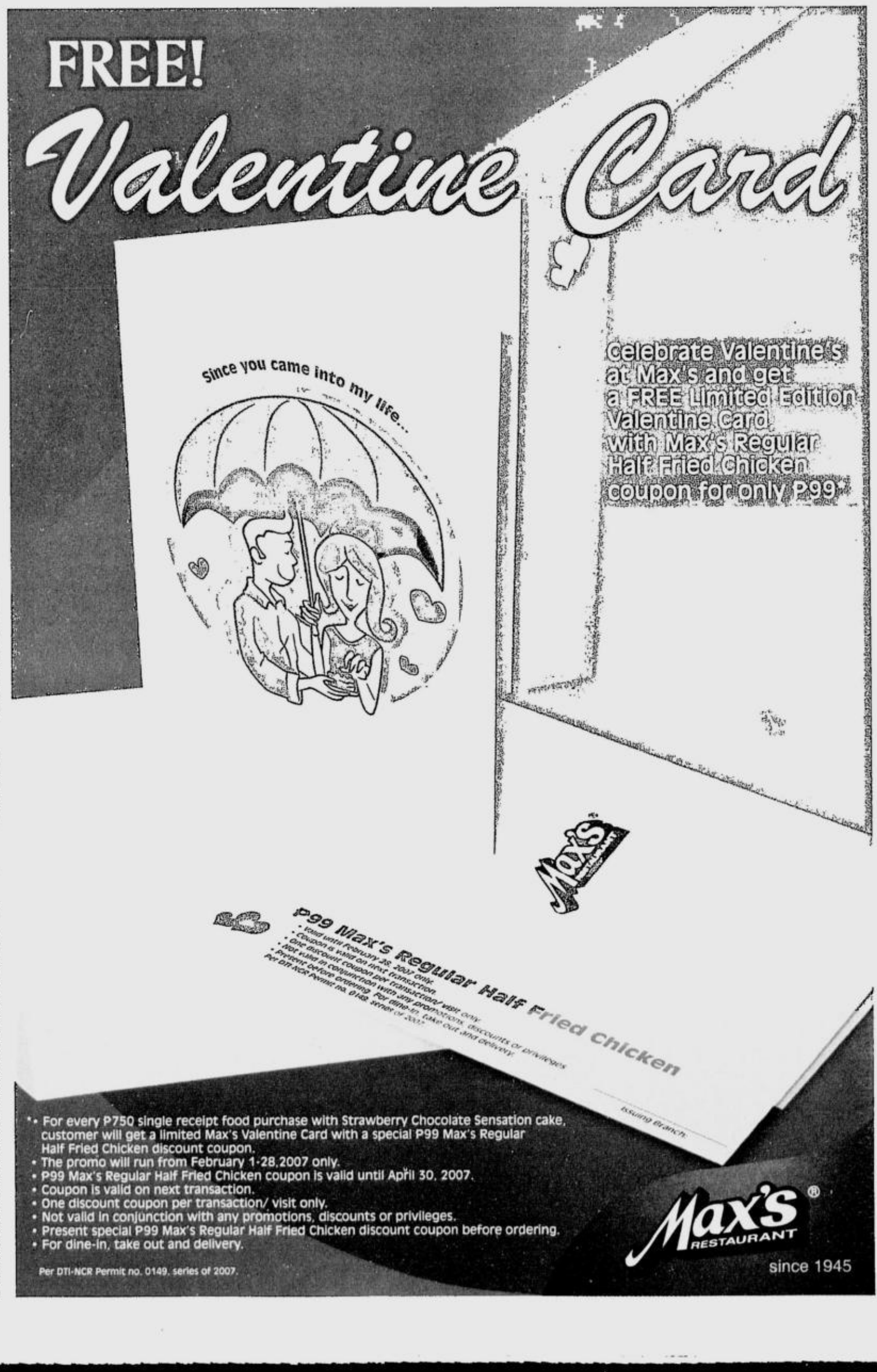
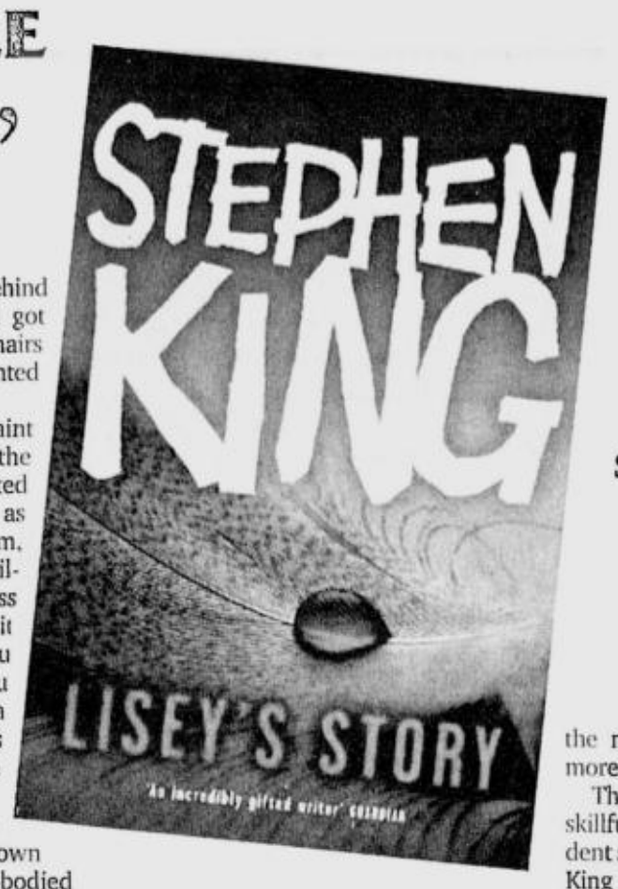


The King of the 'Story'



In 'Lisey's Story,' his most complex and measured novel to date, Stephen King shows that love, art and fear can come from the most unusual places

"Lisey's Story: A Novel"
By Stephen King
Scribner, New York
2006, 512 pages

By Ruel S. De Vera

MOST AUTHORS HAVE A PAGE earlier in their books trumpeting previously published titles, but Stephen King is not like most authors.

He doesn't have such a page in his newest book, the novel "Lisey's Story." Inquisitive minds will concoct two reasons: He doesn't need it, and a page simply wouldn't be enough.

Perhaps the best-known of all the current fictionists, King has been in the news lately because of a perception that he was retiring (not quite yet), and because of the news that his "Dark Tower" series was receiving the comic-book treatment over at Marvel Comics.

Like one of his surprisingly resilient bugaboos, King just keeps on coming. "Lisey's Story" is only the latest in his bibliography, his 61st (or so) book of fiction. It is a complex and ambitious book that seems to be a masterful tapestry woven from the threads of all his other stories. It is an ode to storytelling and marriage, in a patently Stephen King way.

Though his other scary set pieces are more frightening, King's books featuring writers for protagonists carry a palpable personal weight to them, with King clearly channeling himself, making the book that much more substantial and seductive.

That was the case with King's "Bag of Bones," which is, in its own way, this novel's older brother. That novel's protagonist, novelist Michael Noonan, was a stand-in for King, and that Noonan clearly exists in the world of "Lisey's Story" shows that the connections run magically deep.

After the death of her husband, the successful writer Scott due to a befuddling sudden illness, Lisey (pronounced, according to King, like "Cee Cee") is dealing with an empty house, a sister who's gone catatonic and a psychotic stalker who is intent on hurting her.

But that's not what's bothering Lisey the most. There are signs and whispers to indicate that her Scott—or his ghost—is trying to tell her something.

And it is an amazingly trippy thing that Scott wants to tell her. Lisey must go back to her own past, deeper, deeper into Scott's horrific childhood, all the way to a place only called Boo'ya Moon. This other place holds a pool of wonders, as well as a terrible thing that haunts Scott—and soon, Lisey as well.

This is a book about the secret vocabulary of husbands and wives, about the bools and the bad-gunky, what sounds like nursery-rhyme nonsense but are the most meaningful of all.

From there, Lisey (and thus the reader) finds out the stories hidden behind Scott's stories: "Maybe when you got right down to where the short hairs grew, truth was a bool, and all it wanted was to come out."

King is also channeling the quaint mannerisms of a writer, down to the quirky language. It can be posited that King reveals some of his creed as a writer: "He claimed that, for him, writing a book was like finding a brilliantly colored string in the grass and following it to see where it might lead. Sometimes—if you were lucky, if you were brave, if you persevered—it brought you to a treasure. And the treasure was never the money you got for the book; the treasure was the book."

"Lisey's Story" shows that King's statement that he was slowing down was a good thing. The novel is full-bodied and rich, displaying King at the height of his craft, using parenthetical statements and even paragraph breaks as instruments.

An earlier King novel would already be satisfied by ending on page 357, but "Lisey's Story," amazingly enough, actually starts a distinct thread from that point, though the last part really feels like a friendly epilogue more than anything else.

In a novel dedicated to his wife Tabitha, King displays a sweetness that emerges from the darkness. Lisey is an accessible, sympathetic protagonist, a tough but vulnerable widow who misses her husband but also knows what needs to be done.

Her longing is still patent, but also a world away: "He is all she has ever wanted in the dark." That aspect makes "Lisey's Story" a gift to writers' wives everywhere.

But this is a King novel, and nobody does horror like Stephen King. In "Lisey's Story," the horror is from a singular source that is both a creeping shadow and a murderous attacker. While the thing's vicious arrival is gory, its presence, seen and felt in the most unexpected places, is actually more frightening.

That King can unleash a genie that is so skillfully subtle and menacingly self-evident shows how he has this part down pat. King depicts that fear as the flipside of what is bright and gossamer-beautiful in love.

The presence of both of these aspects pervades "Lisey's Story," a welcome cocktail of dream and nightmare from arguably the most accomplished novelist out there.

"Every long marriage has two hearts, one light and one dark," writes Stephen King. "Here again is the dark heart of theirs."

Available in hardcover at National Book Store.

ANGELINA Goloy, Lorna Kalaw-Tirol, Tessie Sionil José, Karina Bolaco and National Artist F. Sionil José

New book by Asuncion David-Maramba

PROFESSOR ASUNCION DAVID-Maramba's latest book, "Essays On Living: Beyond The Classroom," was launched recently at PowerBooks Greenbelt 4, Makati City.

The book, published by Anvil Publishing Inc., is the second compilation of Maramba's essays on her life as a private citizen and as a literature teacher. Her annotations also touch on literature, history, politics and government, and travel. She even offers suggestions on religious reform and the clergy.

PROFESSOR Maramba and her latest opus "Beyond the Classroom"

The event was graced by Maramba's former colleagues, schoolmates, students, relatives, and friends from media and civil society. Leading the throng of attendees were Soni Roco, women's rights advocate and wife of the late Education Secretary and Senator Raul Roco; INQUIRER Reader's Advocate's Lorna Kalaw-Tirol; National Artist F. Sionil José and wife Tess; McCann Erickson executive Emily Abrera; writer and cultural icon Gilda Cordero-Fernando; and Red Cross secretary general Corazon Alma de Leon, former Civil Service commissioner.

The book launch began with Anvil's publishing manager Karina Bolasco's opening remarks. There was also a special double tribute to Maramba. Covering the first part, "Beyond," was Soni Roco. The second part, "The Classroom," featured Fe Arriola, Alexis Salinas, Jackie Aquino, Fr. Chris Salonga and Fr. Joey Irlandez.

Tirol honored Maramba "for unlocking the door of your classroom and thereafter guiding us through life... with your sharp mind, incredible common sense, uncommon courage, and endearing openness."

Maramba is a graduate of Maryknoll, St. Theresa's College Manila and the Ateneo Graduate School. She enjoyed a continuous teaching career spanning 40 years of handling literature and writing courses. Best known among the 15 or so books she has edited or written are her Philippine literature textbooks which have contributed to the awareness of Philippine literature in the country and her three latest books on modern Filipino heroes, heroines and historical personages. She now describes herself as a retired professor, book editor and an occasional columnist.

'Song and Dance' from Rep

CALLED A "THEATER CONCERT" BY its composer, the great Andrew Lloyd Webber ("Cats," "Evita," "Phantom of the Opera," and many, many others) who wrote the musical with Don Black, "Song and Dance" is not your typical Broadway musical.

Part One, "Tell Me on a Sunday," the story of Emma, an English girl who comes to New York to find success and love, is told entirely in song. Part Two, "Variations," tells the continuing story of Joe who comes to New York from a little town in Nebraska, becomes Emma's lover but leaves her. It is told completely in dance, supported by seven other dancers.

Carla Guevara-Laforteza brings her years of experience on stage and television—including a stint in the London production of "Miss Saigon," where, as understudy to the lead role Kim, she played the role many times—to the exacting role of Emma. She performed in many plays and musicals for Repertory Philippines before and after her London experience. She won Best New Artist for Television during the 2000 PMPC Star Awards.

Danny Marshall dances the role of Joe, supported by Powerdance dancers under the direction of Douglas Nierras.

Director is Joy Virata. Gino Gonzales designs the sets, Monino Duque is lights designer, while Inday Echevarria and the RSVP String Ensemble provide musical accompaniment.

"Song and Dance" runs Feb. 9-March 4 at Onstage Theater in Greenbelt 1. Call 8870710/8919999. Tickets are also available at the REP office, 2316 Pasong Tamo Extension, Makati City.

CARLA Guevara-Laforteza

Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero's 'Belong Puti' from Peta

THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL Theater Association brings its 39th theater season to a close with "Belong Puti," a play originally from Wilfrido Ma. Guerrero's "The Woman with a White Veil," adapted (from Ony de Leon's Filipino translation) with additional text and directed by Nonon Padilla.

"Belong Puti" is the story of Rondolf Mauricio, an artistically and spiritually bankrupt playwright. He stalls two angels of death when they come to escort him to the Great Beyond so he can finish his last play.

Rondolf stages the scene in his mind, taking the audience with him from his decrepit deathbed to the Mauricio mansion where rain is about to ruin the party taking place in honor of Annella Mauricio. A matron in her 50s, she arrives with a white veil on her face which she takes off to reveal the face of a woman in her early 20s. She also turns out to be a selfish woman who sends her aging husband to another room, alienates all her friends with her cruel comments, flirts with her daughter's boyfriend and badmouths everyone else including her own mother.

'BELONG Puti,' directed by Nonon Padilla

The play takes a strange twist as Rondolf, stung by his wife's cruelty, exacts revenge on her flawed heroine by turning the playwright into a transvestite hell-bent on aping, and taking on the role of Annella. The play continues with actors taking on roles that are but parodies of Annella's obsession with physical and superficial beauty.

"Belong Puti" features Mario O'Hara, CB Garrucho, Lou Veloso, Sherry Lara, Vicenta Ello-Alaban, Sherlyn Mae Cuare, Upeng Galang-Fernandez, Joan Orendain, Miles Pasamanero, Carme Sanchez and Sonia Valenciano. Production design is by National Artist Salvador Bernal, lighting design by Shoko Matsumoto and music design by Dodjie Fernandez.

"Belong Puti" runs Feb. 9, 16, 23 and March 2, 2:30 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.; and Feb. 10-11, 17-18, 24-25 and March 3-4, 10 a.m. and 3 p.m., at Peta Theater Center located at 5 Sunnyside Drive, New Manila, Quezon City (behind the QC Sports Club along E. Rodriguez Avenue).

Call 7256244, 7218604, 0917-8154567, 0918-9354166. E-mail mpr@petatheater.com or visit www.petatheater.com.

WAR images dug up by filmmakers Peter Parsons and Lucky Guillermo from the US National Archives

New war docu to be premiered

ATROCITIES PERPETRATED BY THE Japanese on innocent residents of Manila 62 years ago are finally being given historical attention. A grim and thorough documentary film by Peter Parsons and Lucky Guillermo has been produced and is being released in time to commemorate the Battle for Manila, which began on Feb. 3, 1945.

The documentary "Manila 1945: The Forgotten Atrocities" puts the blame on Japanese higher authorities, contrary to the usual story that either remnant Japanese forces were trapped in Manila by the Americans and therefore decided to fight to the last man; or that Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi disobeyed orders from General Yarnashita to leave Manila, stayed and went on a rampage of killing.

If the Japanese intended to leave Manila an Open City as General MacArthur had done three years earlier, then why did they spend two months fortifying it with pillboxes and sniper holes, barbed wire and dynamite? Field orders cited indicate the massacres were indeed planned. Over a hundred thousand noncombatants perished during that period including the devastation of the city.

The American forces are not let off scot-free either: There are plenty of examples of deaths that were caused by their heavy artillery.

Parsons and Guillermo spent days and months sifting through papers in the US National Archives and interviewing survivors and historians.

The documentary film is rated "R" by the MTRCB and DVD copies are available at Ayala Museum in Makati and at Solidaridad Book Store in Padre Faura, Ermita, Manila.

The movie will be premiered Feb. 8, 9:30 a.m., at the auditorium of the Miguel de Benavides (Central Library) Building of the University of Santo Tomas. Discussants are National Artist F. Sionil José and historian Rico José.

San Miguel kills... From page C1

The book has a stunning recollection of Ermita before the war. It tells about the roots of the Guerreros.

One discovers that the author's first husband, Lt. Ismael A. Cruz, is a nephew of José Rizal. In fact, Nakpil had lived with Rizal's sister, Maria, in the Cruz residence in Paco during the Japanese Occupation. That makes Gemma Cruz-Araneta, the author's daughter with Cruz, the grandniece of Rizal.

One also discovers that on one side of the Guerrero clan, Nakpil is the cousin of José Mossesgeld Santiago Font, the first and the last Filipino opera singer to sing at La Scala di Milan in Italy.

Nakpil opens the book with an observation that prewar Ermita, where she was born and raised, was not the garish, broken-down, patchwork, district it is today.

In the 1920s, '30s and before February 1945, says the author, Ermita was a charming, colonial town built by Europeans and Americans for their delectation. It had an air of Casablanca, Acapulco or Nice about it.

But the most riveting part is really the untold war story of the author and how her genteel life in Ermita came to an abrupt end in the bloody summer of 1945.

On the night of Feb. 5, 1945, a Japanese sentry was found dead near the street of the Cruz residence in Paco, and the Japanese officers exacted revenge on the entire Cruz family, including Nakpil's husband.

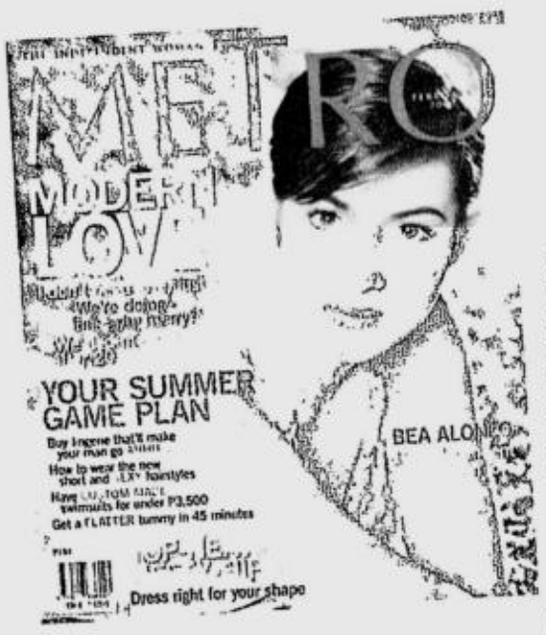
This was the same week Japanese soldiers stormed the *nipa* hut of the family of conductor Redentor Romero in Novaliches. Romero saved his life by playing a Japanese piece called "Hamabe No Uta" on his violin.

This was also the same week the country's first violin prodigy, Ernesto Vallejo, was killed by the retreating Japanese Marines in Tanauan, Batangas, and his four priceless violins were burned.

Nakpil was seven months pregnant (of son, Toto). But with a 16-month-old Gemma in tow, she decided to go back to her Ermita home. Leaving her Paco abode, she ran into a battle zone in Ermita and Malate, which were full of the wounded, the dead and the dying.

Surviving the Japanese marauders and seeing her dear old Ermita virtually reduced to ruins, Nakpil writes the most touching part of the book: "...I had lost my husband, both my homes, my hometown, my city, all resources of every kind except my parents and my brothers who were also destitute. And I was 22."

The book—with its beautiful account of prewar Ermita and shocking account of war destruction—is my Memoir of the Year.



Bea Alonzo talks about Mico Palanca

IN METRO MAGAZINE'S FEBRUARY ISSUE, cover girl Bea Alonzo talks about her "exclusive dating" status with fellow actor Mico Palanca, her suitor for three years now.

"He's very patient... a very conservative person... He is very deep, very intelligent," says Alonzo.

Luis de Terry of Terry's Selection deli and restaurant teaches readers how to organize a fun Valentine's dinner date at home and how to serve the right wine.

Metro also guides readers on how to prepare for summer—where to buy lingerie to seduce the man in your life; how to wear the new short and sexy hairstyles; where to get custom-made suits under P3,500; and how to get a flatter tummy in 45 minutes.

Metro's February issue is now available in newsstands. Call 4152272 loc. 4658.

Derek Ramsay, suits, jewelry, baldness

A DASHING AND DAPPER DEREK RAMSAY shows off his athletic side in the latest issue of the country's only men's style magazine, Metro hiM. The actor and model graces the cover of Metro hiM where he talks about his current obsession, Ultimate Frisbee, and confesses his ultimate dream: to teach kids mathematics.

The star of "Super Inggo" also reveals a surprising secret—on how he keeps fit. Clue: He doesn't need to go the gym.

Also in Metro hiM's first-quarter issue, learn 10 ways to wear a suit jacket, and where to shop for the best bathrobes, pajamas and eyeglasses. Read the guide on the best copper and brass jewelry, and how to wear the in colors of the season, orange and yellow.

No time for the gym? Get fit in less time with a revolutionary 25-minute workout. There's also a story on how to deal with baldness, as Metro hiM features the country's only hair-transplant surgeon.

Metro hiM is available nationwide. Call 4152272 local 4665.

Not so apocalyptic

From page C4

moves down from the macro to a group of firefighters led by Nicolas Cage, "Apocalypto" centers on Jaguar Paw, whose story, however, is too small a dot in the context to carry the burden of the movie.

The result, as is chimed in by a number of critics from the academe, is an unforgivable negligent passing over of the Maya's rich achievements in science, culture and the arts.

Of course, as the title suggests, something big is happening, but you tend to forget that during the movie and just try to keep up with the chase. The title itself is a foreboding of something terminal, not really positive, despite Gibson's doubtful romanticizing of it as meaning "a new beginning."

It appears the movie effectively leaves the imminent Mayan collapse to an approaching Spanish fleet. Talk about a *maranatha*.

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2) Entries may be submitted through a) drop boxes deployed in selected supermarkets/ groceries nationwide; b) major Jollibee Party Stores; and, c) mailing or hand-carrying to JSU Office at any of the following branches:

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Each winner will receive one (1) Jollibee Birthday Party Certificate worth Six Thousand Pesos (P6,000) and one (1) Birthday Party Cake certificate worth Five Hundred Pesos (P500).

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1) Entries will be classified into five (5) areas: NCR, North Luzon, South Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.
2) You are required to drop your entries within the area covered by your mailing address. Otherwise, winning entries will be disqualified. (e.g. 123 Gov. Pack Rd. cor. Upper Session Rd. **Baguio City** should be submitted at any **North Luzon** dropbox centers only).
3) Deadline for submission of entries and the corresponding draw dates are as follows:

	Deadline of Submission	Draw Date	No. of Winners
1st Monthly Draw	Jan. 31, 2007	Feb. 9, 2007, 3PM	50 winners
2nd Monthly Draw	Feb. 28, 2007	Mar. 9, 2007, 3PM	50 winners
Grand Draw	Mar. 31, 2007	Apr. 10, 2007, 3PM	100 winners

4) All entries will be drawn at the following JSU Offices at exactly 3 o'clock in the afternoon and will be attended by JSU and DTI representatives.
a) For GMA and Luzon Entries - JSU Pasig Warehouse
b) For Visayas Entries - JSU Cebu
c) For Mindanao Entries - JSU CDO
5) For the 1st and 2nd Monthly Draws, 10 Free Birthday Party Packages will be given in each of the 5 areas (i.e., GMA, South Luzon, North Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao). For the Grand Draw, 20 Free Birthday Party Packages will be given per area.
6) Promo participants can only win once within the entire promo duration. Non-winning entries in the 1st and 2nd Monthly Draws will still be included in the Grand Draw.
7) Entries thru mail will only be accepted until the following date and time for each draw:
a) 1st Draw: February 8, 2007, 5PM b) 2nd Draw: March 8, 2007, 5PM
c) Grand Draw: April 10, 2007, 9AM

E. CLAIMING OF PRIZES:

1) Winners in each draw will be announced in major broadsheets.
2) Within a week after each draw, all winners will be informed through a NOTIFICATION LETTER which will be delivered straight to their houses through Worklink. Worklink will present all the acknowledgement receipts to JSU.
3) Winners can claim their Jollibee birthday party certificates from February 8, 2007 to October 31, 2007 at any of the specified JSU offices near their location.
a) After the redemption period, JSU will mail the prizes through courier.
b) Said service partner shall present the acknowledgement receipts to JSU.
4) Winners will be asked to present their notification letter plus 2 valid IDs for verification purposes.
5) Winners can use their birthday party certificates at their chosen Jollibee party store from **February 8, 2007 to December 31, 2008** only.
6) Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash.
7) Employees of UNITRADE and JOLLIBEE, its advertising agencies and suppliers, including their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the Raffle Promo.

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4560, Series of 2006

RUDY Youngblood makes powerful acting debut as Jaguar Paw.

Not so apocalyptic

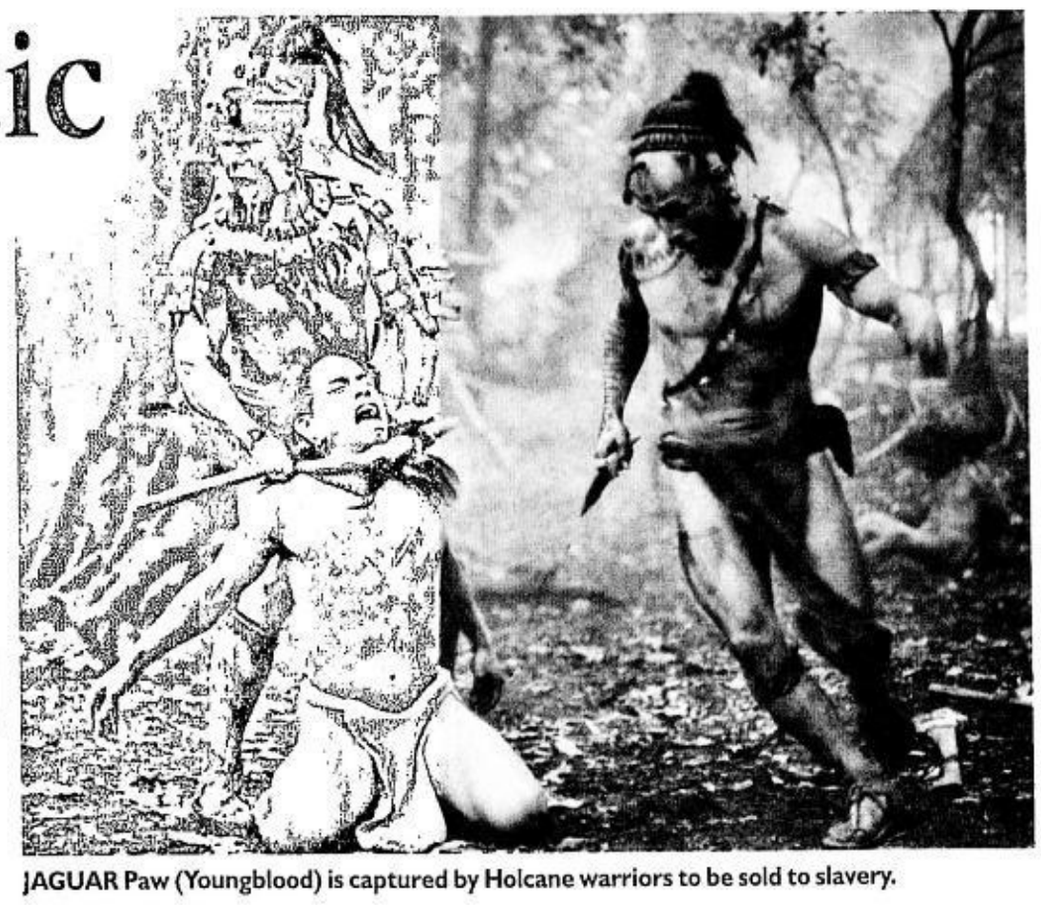
By Eldric Paul A. Peredo
Contributor

A FULL HOUR INTO MEL GIBSON'S "APOCAlypto" (Touchstone Pictures), the viewer may start to figure out what lead character Jaguar Paw (outstandingly played by big-screen neophyte Rudy Youngblood) has to do with the end of the ancient Mayan world.

Because the truth is, Jaguar Paw has nothing to do with it. Quite the contrary: The times leading to the Mayan apocalypse have everything to do with how Jaguar Paw eventually leads his life.

Instead of telling us how the grand Mayan civilizations collapsed, the movie zooms far in to show us the story of Jaguar Paw, an otherwise nobody who must deal with the changes of the times. The viewer should have seen that coming from the movie's poster: "An epic journey home."

The viewer's reasons for expecting the story to be of broader scale are obvious. Earlier Mel Gibson directorials were hardly protagonist-driven. Of course, in "The Passion," the Christ was the epic.



JAGUAR Paw (Youngblood) is captured by Holcane warriors to be sold to slavery.

What's more, the lengths the crew went through to recreate the great jungle world of the Maya was nothing short of ambitious, from ensuring that the Mesoamerican ethnicity of the cast was as far as possible approximated in terms of looks and language, to building the production design in a real jungle.

But there it is. The implosion of the Mayan cities is shown only in hints: drought, famine, and sickness. Add to that the brutal slaying of men as offering to the gods so that the difficult times would pass, fields of rotting bodies exponentially increasing the already poor health conditions in a forest setting.

There is, for sure, that larger picture. But to look for that in the movie would be like an ant looking up at the sky. Or, if that's too incongruous, a house, if you will. Because the story, written by Gibson and Farhad Safinia, is happening on the ground.

It is of Jaguar Paw and his tribe being sacked by Holcane warriors and later brought to the city either to be sold or sacrificed. The story is about his spectacular escape.

Adrenaline

Oh, the thrill, that's foremost. The adrenaline rush is as primal as it can get. The action, including the gritty, small-scale battles, is as barbaric as the era. Gibson, actually, is betraying his severe bloodlust. "Gladiator" is tame compared to this gusher. But then again, the Romans were a lot more "civilized."

Mel Gibson's end-of-civilization epic is impressive but hardly explains the collapse of the ancient Mayans

The forest chase should get nods from critics for its brilliant cinematography and editing. The production design is detailed enough, thanks to extensive research by Mayan culture experts. Hey, if they can replicate the language, why not the culture, down to the scar tattoo designs?

But that is not correct. The language Gibson used is Yucatec Maya, still spoken by scattered Mayan ethnics today.

"Apocalypto" chose to ride on the Mayan theory of the apocalypse (which is supposed to happen sometime 2012), and placed an imagined snip of time at the downfall of the Maya half a century ago at parallel with the present.

Much like how "World Trade Center"

NOT SO/ C3

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

LIFESTYLE

"LA FEMME" I

Deadly exotic

By Lito B. Zulueta

LYDIA VELASCO'S WOMEN seem to approximate Gauguin's South Pacific figures, cultivating the same rustic appeal, the same plainness.

But Velasco is not Gauguin. She couldn't be by virtue of her gender and her socio-historical moorings. Although, like Gauguin, she tends to exoticize her figures, she also endows them with the rather edgy spirit of the age. And it's an age that, while rife with gender stereotyping, is also fired by resistance.

The more contemporary sensibility of Velasco is evident in the studied poses that seem to give her Filipina figures a certain Sphinx-like quality, impenetrable and even dangerous. Hers are Filipino women on the edge, perhaps on the verge of a nervous breakdown, perhaps about to spring at men who are the enemy.

Her newest show seems to thrive on stereotyping in order to declare sexual insurrection. The title of the series is predictable, "Allure"; it more than connotes the base feminine qualities of seductiveness and sensuality. It's a connotation that would infuriate feminists.

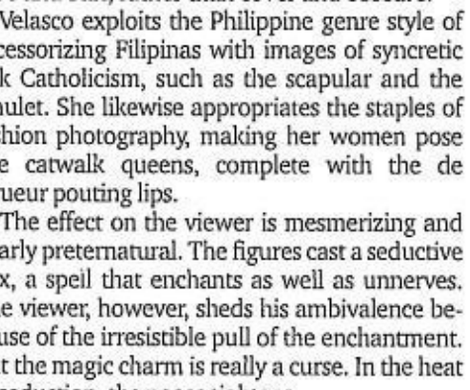
But *allure* comes from the late Middle English word *aluren* which is further derived from a host of other old words, such as the German *luder*; or "bait." In other words, the title of the show is really a "lure," a "decoy," a "trap."

Velasco herself seems to draw from genre styles to tighten the trap. Her figures in acrylic are clad in the gauziest Filipiniana—in *calado* (the trademark of another supreme woman artist)—that playfully hides the flesh while seducing the watcher's eye. While the fabrics are generous, they are also cut and positioned as to bare and bait, rather than cover and obscure.

Velasco exploits the Philippine genre style of accessorizing Filipinas with images of syncretic folk Catholicism, such as the scapular and the amulet. She likewise appropriates the staples of fashion photography, making her women pose like catwalk queens, complete with the de rigueur pouting lips.

The effect on the viewer is mesmerizing and nearly preternatural. The figures cast a seductive hex, a spell that enchants as well as unnerves. The viewer, however, sheds his ambivalence because of the irresistible pull of the enchantment. But the magic charm is really a curse. In the heat of seduction, the noose tightens.

"Allure: An Intimate Look at the Filipina" opens Feb. 8, 7 p.m., and runs until Feb. 22. Galerie Joaquin is at 371 P. Guevarra St. and Montessori Lane, Addition Hills, San Juan, Metro Manila. Call 7239253/9418 or visit www.galeriejoaquin.com.



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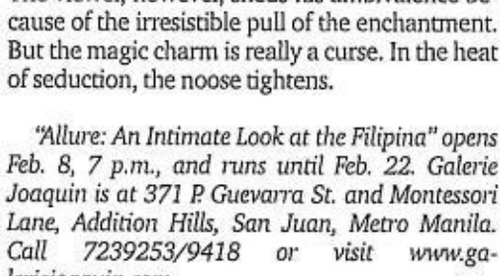

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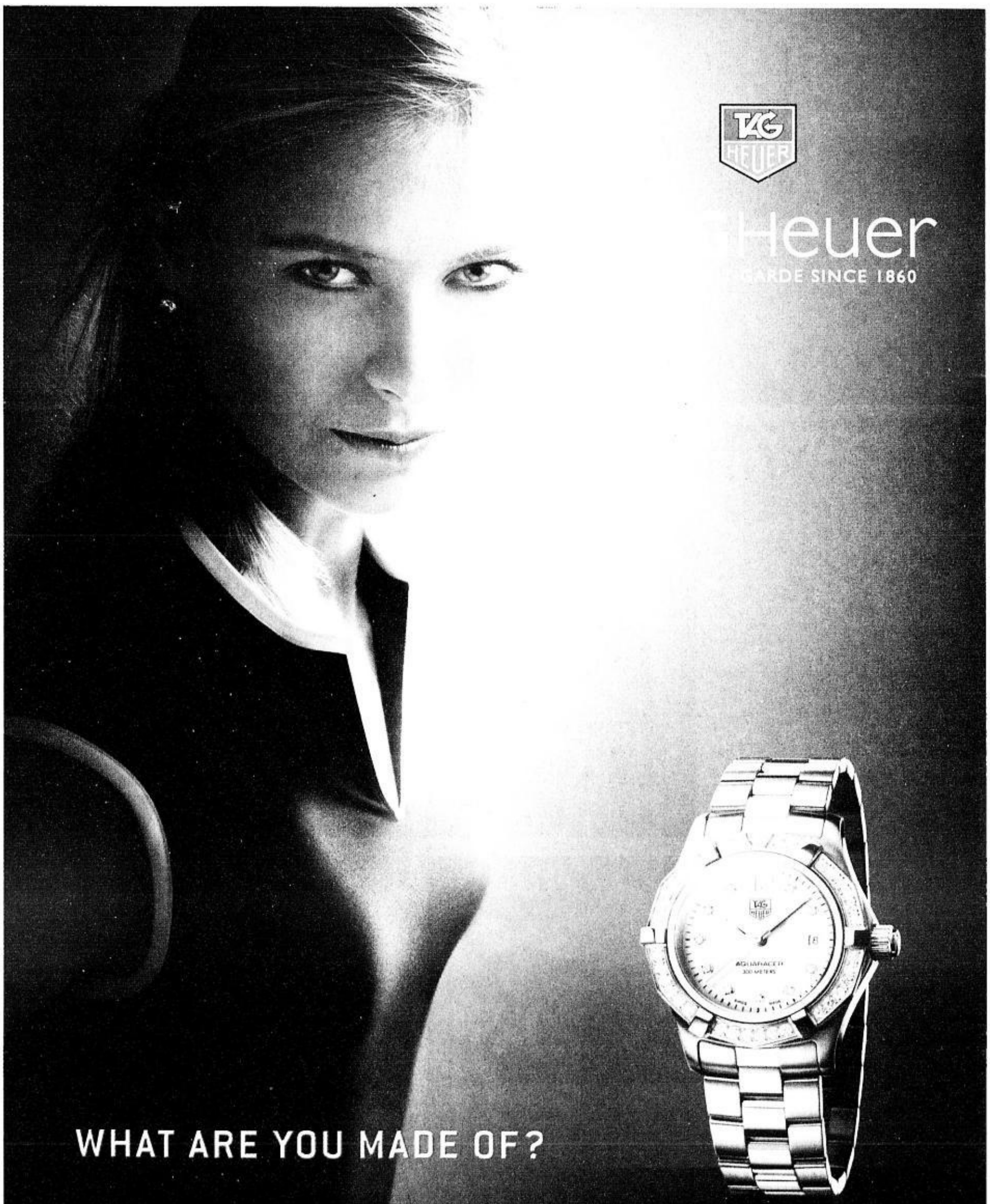


THE ARTIST

"COOKS"

Magsaysay-Ho revives romance of tempera paintings

ANITA MAGSAYSAY-HO, WORKING with Singapore-based art consultant Matin Tran, is holding a one-woman exhibition of egg-tempera works and monoprints at the Yuchengco Museum, RCBC Tower, Makati City.

In "Anita Magsaysay-Ho: From Egg Tempera to Print," the 92-year-old artist is showcasing decades-old works, with her trademark Filipino women in the rural areas as core subject.

MATIN Tran of Matin Tran Art Consultancy, Sr. Luz Maria of the Capuchin Sisters, and sponsor Winnie Go

Originally an orthodox medium of painting, egg tempera has gone far from its medieval heyday. It is considered as the hardest medium to prepare and handle.

Prevalent in Southern Europe's Middle Ages, tempera is traditionally created by hand-grinding dry-powdered pigments into egg yolks, which are the fundamental binding element. The concoction is sometimes combined with honey, water, milk and a variety of plant gums.

The traditional method requires the application of numerous small brush strokes in a cross-hatching technique, making the colors, which are painted over each other, resemble pastel when unvarnished, and a deeper color when varnished.

Because tempera cannot be applied in thick layers as oil paints can, tempera paintings rarely have the deep color saturation that oil paintings can achieve. However, tempera colors do not change over time, whereas oil paints darken, yellow, and go transparent as time goes by.

Mentored by Fernando and Pablo Amorsolo, Vicente Rivera, Ireneo Miranda and Fabian de la Rosa, Anita Magsaysay-Ho is considered the Philippines' first female Modernist.

Born on May 25, 1914, Magsaysay-Ho has mastered the art of egg tempera, depicting images from her own life while growing up in the rural areas. Her paintings have obtained record prices at international auctions, fetching as high as 26 times the original catalog estimate.

The proceeds from the etchings in the exhibition will be donated to the Capuchin Sisters of the Holy Family Home and the Philippine General Hospital's Obstetric ward. The exhibit runs through February.

Call 65-62529217 or 65-9298 0836, or e-mail matin@matintran.com; and 7285598 or 8132617, or e-mail selectmedia@pldtdsl.net.

The evolutionary process in art

By Constantino C. Tejero

THE TITLE OF JING TURALBA'S PAINTING exhibit "Exploits on the Dining Table" is misleading. One would think it's about still life of foodstuff, but the show really explores the creative process—the artist's anxieties, doubts and hesitations, aggressiveness, unbound imagination.

Consider these pieces in acrylic on canvas and on masonite, presented by Yellow Door Gallery until Feb. 10 at R1 Corridor of The Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City.

That title refers to the artist's makeshift studio, that is, her dining room—particularly the dining table on which these pieces were created.

But instead of table settings, we find bold coloration and quasi-abstraction. Instead of images of bread, fruits or wine bottles, we see ancient buildings at dusk, old street lamps in a blaze, shadowy figures on a beach.

Turalba reveals these images were inspired by her travels to Europe, particularly "the European love of beauty and art." The viewer can espy that in the distorted street lamps in "Illuminati," or the architectural details in "Monte Berico"—all done in rich color tonality.

It all actually starts with color, as with the piece called "Silent Chatter," consisting of black outlines of three women sitting in a circle in a blaze of red, yellow and orange.

The artist relates how that piece came about: "I kept putting elements on it until it reached a point where I thought it looked beautiful already. But somehow, deep inside me, I knew it was not finished yet."

Reviewing some sketches she had made as an art student, she came upon a study of women on the beach having a conversation. Intuitively she found the painting's missing link, and so added the image to the fiery colorfield.

Each of these pieces Turalba considers a product of "inspired moments." She adds: "I want the viewers to feel my passion in the colors and the strokes, to see how I gave my best of those moments to each painting."

The bold colorism reflective of emotional intensity, she says, comes from the Abstract Expressionists and the Fauvists, particularly Matisse. But she admits she's also inspired by Chagall, Dubuffet and Rauschenberg, as can be gleaned from her image-making and formal composition.

Though confined in a little room, a real artist can always unleash his or her imagination. Thus, the "exploits" in the exhibit's title refers not just to the artist's European sojourn but also to these adventures of the imagination, including her experimentation in color and form.

"When he couldn't paint anymore, Matisse continued to create art by cutting colored paper," she points out. "When I paint, I keep myself challenged by working toward breakthroughs in tough circumstances, and then setting new benchmarks. It sustains my process of discovery and keeps the newness in my painting, and I know this will lead to mastery."

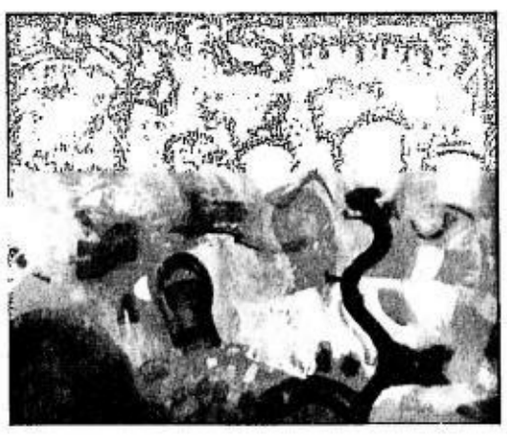
Turalba studied painting at the Paris Academy of Art. Starting as a realist, she is now gradually eliminating figuration from her canvas.

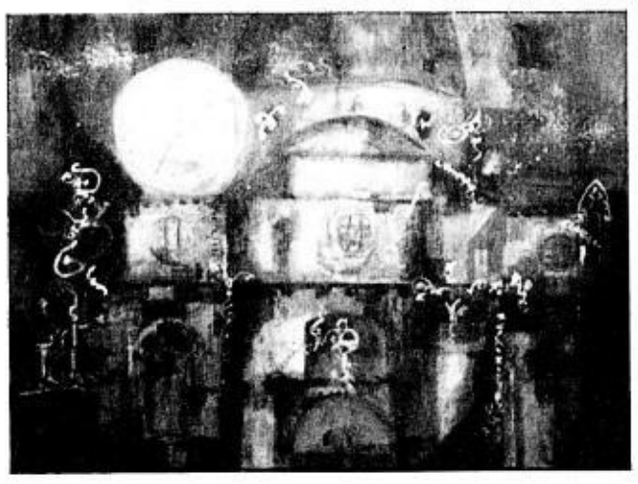
"Filled with a new sense of freedom," she says, "I now anxiously explore the realm of the abstract, experimenting, pushing the confines of my knowledge."

She also took up photography and jewelry design. She had mounted several exhibits of photos of landscapes and underwater species, and won twice the Tahitian Pearl Trophy Asia for jewelry design.

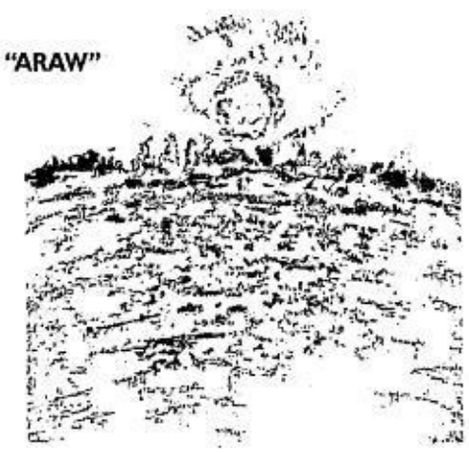
"I like discovering how some masters went about doing their works," she says. "Then I imagine what they were thinking and how they felt and expressed themselves through their art."

All these illustrate not just the restlessness that bedevils the artist but also the evolutionary process that occurs in art-making.





CLOCKWISE from top: "Silent Chatter," "Monte Berico" and "Illuminati"



"ARAW"

Montemayor's 'Bagong Araw'

FERDIE MONTEMAYOR SHOWcases his recent works on canvas in "Bagong Araw," at the Boston Gallery, on Feb. 10-28.

Montemayor is known for his expressionist representations of cities and urban life seen from an aerial perspective. His new works in acrylic take him to depictions of the suburbs and their inhabitants drenched in the warm tones of local sunlight.

The new series is a result of the artist's unique reworking of water-based acrylic medium, which he applies in layers of varying effects of opacity, transparencies and translucencies.

Montemayor's brushwork is liquid; traces of its passage still evident, with the dispersal of colors running spontaneously across the pictorial frame. Sealed in glossy finish, the artist's predominantly white canvases acquire a nacre-like luster, almost evocative of lacquerwork.

"Bagong Araw" opens Feb. 10, 6 p.m. Boston Gallery is an affiliate of the Silangan Foundation for the Arts, Culture and Ecology and is at 72 Boston St. and Lantana Sts., Cubao, Q.C. Call 7229205 or visit www.thebostongallery.com.

VISUAL A

Stevesantos at West

The West Gallery (4/L Building A, SM Meg scapes," by Stevesantos until Feb. 13. The of his latest works in acrylic on canvas and mostly in color, as it focuses on mood and

Abstractionists at Duemila

Abstract artists and University of the East Arts alumni Augusto "Gus" Albor, Edwin C. Red Mansueto, and Roberto M.A. Robles "Memoirs," on view at Galleria Duemila u

Albor uses familiar shapes and lines but than what is readily seen and into what is eventually felt.

AUGUSTO Albor, L Edwin Coscolluela, R

Coscolluela shows five distinct digital designs. "I can always delete or undo what I do on the computer, unlike in painting when you cannot delete the colors you ha vas ... It's interesting, the things that you

Lao Lianben is a master of subtlety and a keen observer of his surroundings, often materials to depict human condition, acco and the bad. Robles enjoys creating raw, r

Duemila is at 210 Loring St., Pasay City 8319990 or visit www.galleriaduemila.com

Eteve at Avellana

Henri Eteve, a French national who began his career at Los Indios Bravos, looks back at four decades worth of creativity and imaginative exuberance in the show "Versatility," on view at Avellana Art Gallery until March 10. Though not exactly a retrospective, the show assembles what is perhaps the most representative works of the artist in different forms and media, exemplifying his vision

His more than 60 pieces of artworks (m media, tapestries/carpets and found object array of materials (wood, marble, acrylic s aircraft aluminum, wool, among more uti hibit rooms, occupying almost every squa gallery with joie-de-vive colors, amorphou sometimes ironic, streak of sensibility, tra

Showcasing the artist's uninhibited us choice of subject matter, the show, howev pursuit of shaping delicious and exhilarat of the subconscious, nourished by wond ness of the human spirit, prompting Etev works as Di Meliora, or "for the better."

Avellana is located at A-19, 2680 F.B H (fronting Gideon Academy). Call 8338357

Biglang-awa at Finale

Pablo Biglang-awa Jr., director of the critically acclaimed full-length digital movie "Inang Yaya," returns to the art scene with "Obligatory Consumption." On view until Feb. 13 at Finale Art Gallery (4L, SM Megamall), the exhibit, curated by Roberto Chabet, explores the transac gritty in the production of make-believ

"CASTIN

In somber tones and tilted angles and dee in film and animation, the paintings suggest t render depth and definition to what the auth

Giving credit to his mentors in introd onating vocabulary of images, the artist say creative minds in the industry during my Cinema Artists and Tony Gloria's Optima Do nation with visual imagery." Call 634-241

"LANDSCAPE"

Rojas at Ricco Rer

Ricco Renzo Galleries & 210 Nicanor Garcia St B sents "Sicile," the 37th o Rojas, Feb. 8-March 8 T depicting scenes from the rope. Call 8982542/43 o

'Larger than Life'

The Metropolitan Museu Larger than Life," Feb 8 features paintings and large-scale sculptures that show the human form that is distorted e made giant-like, to make him "larger than life tional Artists Cesar Legaspi, Arturo Luz, Ang (Bencab); Onib Olmedo, Hugo Yonzon Jr. Ar

The exhibit will run until April 6. The M Track Lessons! Basic Portrait Drawing Fe 5237855 and 5361566 or e-mail info@me

Arts Month exhibits at Nationa

In celebration of the Arts Month, the Natio special art exhibits at the Museum of the Fi nance Building), Rizal Park, Manila: "Lu hibit on the artistry and achievements of N "The Colonial Imagery (El Imaginario Colon tory of photography during the Spanish Pe ipina," identifies plants introduced to the Ph "Building Modernity: A Century of Philippin Arts." All exhibits are on view until Feb 28

Art training at National Museu

The National Museum will conduct a Doc Visual Art, Feb. 6-9. The seminar covers h tion of art; precolonial and Southeast Asia in the Philippines; Philippine art from the present; and study and appreciation of art Gallery. Registration fee is P5,000. Call 52

GRUPONG Atelier, a fellowship of UST opened its sixth group exhibit at Galer Intramuros. In photo are Perry Asido-L Abelardo, Elvie Pumanes, Jossie Abella Galeria de las Islas, Hermie del Rosario Labsan, Dodie Faustino, Trio Tamayo a show runs until Feb. 28. Call 5272113.

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RTS

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School of Music and Fine
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Philippines. Call (632)

WORK by Henri Eteve

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visit www.finaleartfile.com.

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visit www.riccorenzo.com.

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Museum also offers Fast-
. 17, 1-5 p.m. Call
museum.ph.

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Call 5270278 for details.

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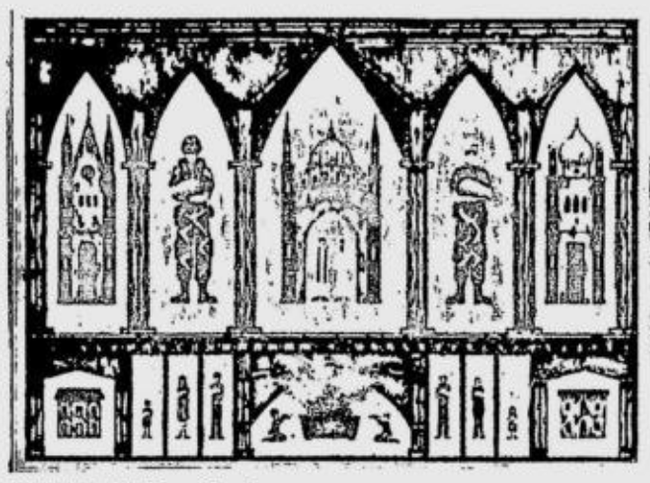
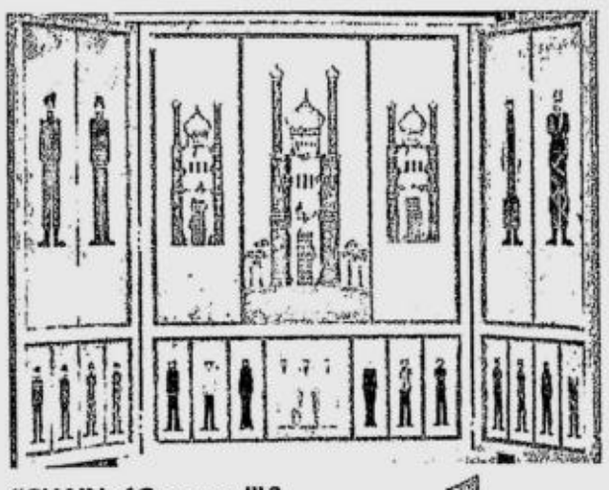
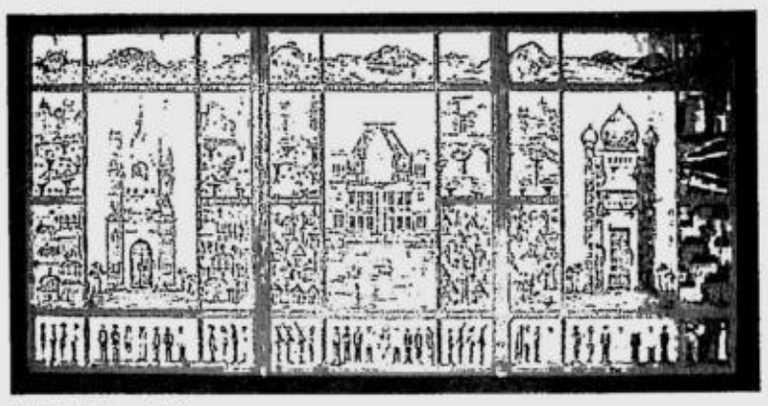


"ULTIMATE Sacrifice"



"CHAIN of Command" 2



"10 PT Agenda"

The art of living in harmony

By Kitty Go
Contributor

THERE HAVE BEEN A FEW INCIDENTS in my career where I didn't want to be at an event or a press briefing, then ended up moved by such event enough to write about it, think up a story or make a priceless contact.

Such was my meeting in Hong Kong with Filipino artist Anton del Castillo (visit www.antondelcastillo.com/julius_anthony.del_castillo@up.edu.ph), whose primary subject in his paintings is Muslim and Christian relations.

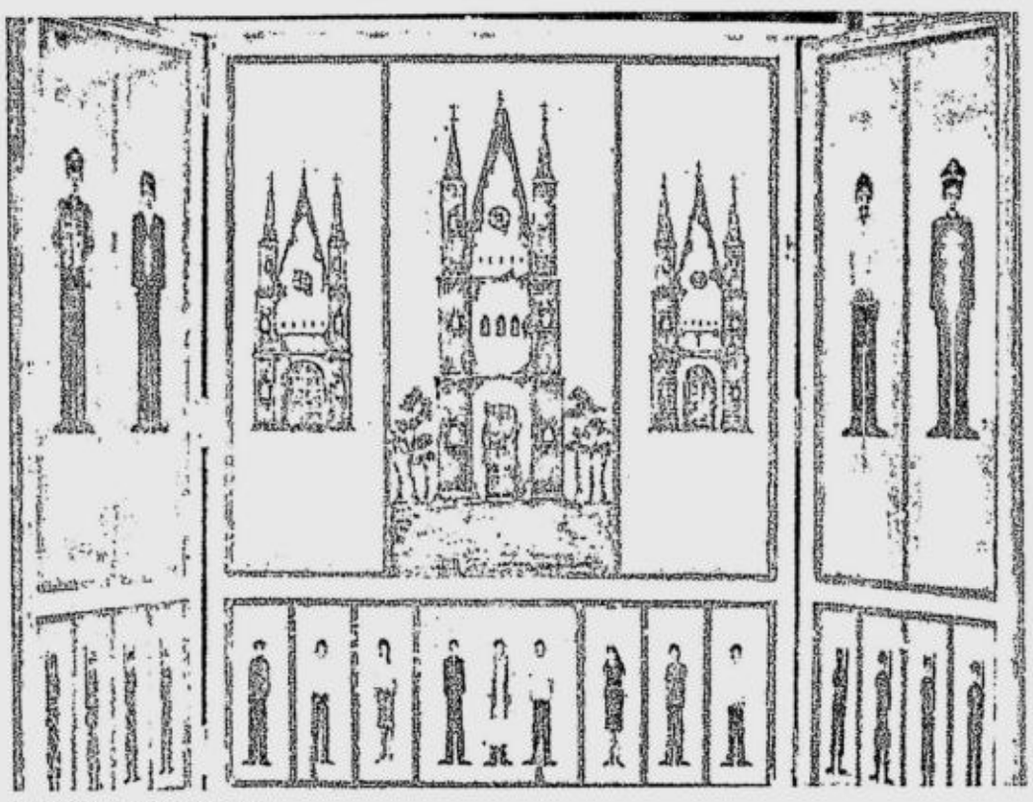
For someone who reports on the glamorous world of fashion, I had made up my mind before we met that this topic of art was certainly not going to be up there with the buzz of an "it" bag. I was wrong.

Del Castillo was chosen by the Asian Cultural Council (ACC) to show in Hong Kong last October together with other artists—Jaffa Lam and Pak Sheung Chuen from Hong Kong and Wei Qingji from Guangzhou.

He has been awarded the Sovereign Art Foundation Fellowship for visual arts to undertake research on Byzantine-icon paintings in American collections and take part in a residency program.

Del Castillo is a painter from Manila who is also an assistant professor of painting at the University of the Philippines Integrated School in Quezon City. He is still at the stage where he has to have a full-time job to support his art, but from what he exhibited in Hong Kong, he may soon be giving up the day job.

Aside from numerous exhibitions and awards, Del Castillo trained at the National Museum, where he did conservation of polychrome wooden sculpture on icons and altars. It was there in 2000 that he discovered what was to become his signature medium: gold leaf.



"CHAIN of Command" 1

Marriage

His medium and large pieces combine oil and gold leaf in the Byzantine or early-Christian style illustrating the controversial issues of contemporary Muslim and Christian tensions. This artistic and sociopolitical marriage makes describing his work in words very difficult.

Aside from the gold leaf, a signature style of Del Castillo's work is the use of frames to narrate, isolate and unify his visual ideas. He frames his work not unlike Byzantine artists did with religious paintings and altar installations.

He substitutes religious icons with equally iconic symbols of Muslim-Christian relations—the military, women in *burqua*, interreligion relationships, *mujadeen*, Muslims holding lambs (a symbol of heroic sacrifice to both Christians and Muslims), churches, mosques, Arabic messages and scenes of destruction.

Del Castillo makes it his mission to unite Christians and Muslims. "As an artist," he says, "one way I can contribute to this world is to use my art to draw out the unity of Muslims and Christians."

His wife is from Mindanao and he has spent time in Davao, where he observed that Christians could be unfair to Muslims. He once had a one-man show and invited imams, Catholic priests and members of the Philippine military to an event "where they all respected each other."

The Cultural Center of the Philippines, Malacañang Palace and Metrobank have bought Del Castillo's work. Private collectors include National Artist Napoleon Abueva, Jim and Rebecca Feliciano, Reggie Quimbo, and Mayor Ninay Manzana.

It is not unusual for contemporary Filipino artists to sell or exhibit abroad to establish a following. The same (together with local speculation of the market) is happening in contemporary Chinese art.

Michelle Vosper, a representative of the Asian Cultural Council in Hong Kong, said: "A native Philippine artist with a local following is always a good sign of talent."

"REVELATION," by Christian Mirang

"NOTHING You Can Do That Can Not Be Done," by Raymond Sumalinog Libiran

"TUGATOG," by Maximo Chan Jr.

2006 AAP Annual harvest

By Gino Dormiendo
Contributor

IT WAS A CONTEST THAT CLEARLY separated the boys from the men, the dividing line not unlike light and shadow. Which proved to be quite a tall order for the jury, including this writer, as there were innumerable entries that fell into the way of the good, the bad, the pretentious—and the mediocre.

The 59th Art Association of the Philippines (AAP) Annual had been, from the start, beset with logistical problems, as the sponsor of the cash prizes had backed out, and its long-time patron, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, has, as of this writing, yet to come to the succor of the grand old dame of Philippine art.

Many of the artists had also opted to join more lucrative contests, albeit there were more offerings available at the AAP Annual.

The first prizewinner in the painting category is Christian Mirang for "Revelation," a powerfully conjured image inspired by verses from the Bible with their two main elements—doves and nails—captured in their divinely paradoxical fates: flight to freedom and decapitation.

The second prize went to Charlie Rana Villagracia's "Grief of Ego," a postmodern rendering of melancholia and death exacted on a couple of pet birds, a haunting scene devoid of melodrama.

Third prize went to Salvador Corpuz Sierra's "Suntok sa Hangin," a surreal view of a biker at the helm of a make-believe contraption of a folk jeepney.

I also liked Emmanuel Balboa's "Alay," with its tableau of prey and predator, in a folksy comedy of manners, showing his trademark feline characters.

Honorable mention went to Jojit Solano's "Ang Ikalawang Anyo ni Padre Damaso," with its image of criminals in religious frock; Roel Obemio's "Box Scapes"; Malyn Bonatog's "Ang Pamana ni Inang Inang"; and George Valencia's "Paradise Shift."

The mixed-media category was dominated by new names. First prize went to Lucio Taguiam's "Paupertas," a top view of a slum colony, made from salvaged hubris, encrusted by ubiquitous tires and wires on rooftops as emblems of Third World condition.

Second was Yuan Mor'O Ocampo's "Alipato," a minimalist view of subterranean life, cleverly assembled from painted dried twigs.

Third was Demosthenes Campos' "Divided," a multi-layered suite of worn-out canvases, complete with thin patches of pockmarked iridescent panels.

Honorable-mention citations went to Oriole Palacio's "Untitled," Benjie Bisaya's "Woodmask Series," Christian Mirang's "Sisters in Arms" and Nelson Ferraris' "Crossroads."

As in the past, the sculpture category was generally lackluster, with entries that lacked imagination and logic, and most verging on the sophomoric and the embarrassingly literal.

A judge said: "That's really a problem when artists are dictated by the available material rather than by the idea they aspire to explore and interpret." I couldn't help but agree.

The first prize went to Maximo Chan Jr.'s "Tugatog," a literally figurative piece with a pair of bodies ascending to the top of the recycled wood serving as pedestal/totem pole.

Second was Glenn Cagandahan's "Paul and Silas;" third was Merlito Gepte's "Politics," with a pair of protagonists locked in fierce combat, with a woman draped in Philippine flag, symbolic of how our politicos settle issues, *personalan*, so they say.

The drawing category enlisted past winners and a few new names, with first prize going to veteran Raymond Libiran for his "Nothing You Can Do That Cannot Be Done," a *retablo* of dramatis personae culled from all key players of Philippine society.

Second was Christopher Pasco's "Mixed Me-

2006 AAP/ D4

"PAUPERTAS," by Lucio Taguiam

Abrigo's poetics of space

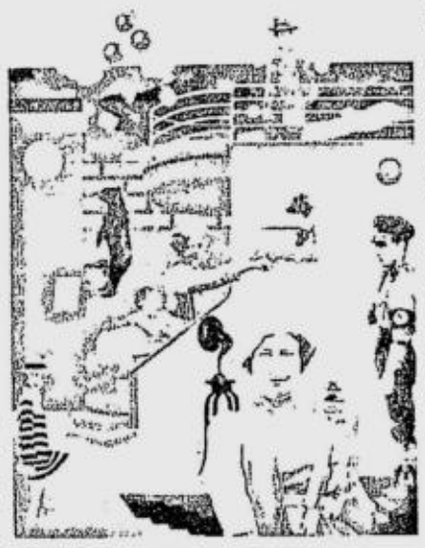
By Gary C. Devilles
Contributor

PHILOSOPHER GASTON BACHELARD believes that the very spaces we inhabit and frequent are not just palpable expression of our being but by themselves material for constituting ourselves. Whether this is just a corner in our house, or the streets where we usually promenade, these spaces, the public and the intimate, the ordinary and the spectacular, shape our thoughts, build relationships, store memories and even provide dreams.

For Buen Abrigo, a graduating Fine Arts student from the Univesity of the Philippines Diliman, spaces take on an enhanced significance, ever more poetic, if only we can see with the soul of the eye.

In "Mock Donald," he depicts a Bakhtinian space where internal organs such as the intestines and the heart are scattered, with fowls like a swan and probably robins in a backyard of what could probably be an abattoir with an insignia of McDonald on its roof. The scene paints a mocking rhetoric in so far as fast food hastened the malling of landscape, widened the chasm between the rich and the poor, fueled an epidemic of obesity, and propelled American cultural imperialism abroad.

Abrigo is being romantic in juxtaposing an idyllic landscape in the background with the slaughter at the center, which perhaps reminds us of the barbaric space we now dwell in and the dreamscape that looms in the horizon.



"TAKE Your Time"

Violence and commerce

Abrigo's social commentary of space takes on a philosophical level as he depicts Marfa, Texas, a military base now turned into a tourist destination, where all traces of violence seem effaced by the thriving commercial centers. Marfa was founded as a railroad water stop, and grew quickly through the 1920s.

Marfa Army Air Field was located east of the town during the war and trained several thousand pilots before closing in 1945.

Titled "Elmgreen and Dragset's Prada from Marfa to Dystopia"—a fitting tribute to two installation artists, Michael Elmgreen and Ingar Dragset—here is a hybrid creature of an ostrich with human legs walking to a Prada store. Like an ostrich that buries its head when in danger, consumers or tourists seem oblivious to the real threat for which the place now is just a spectral reminder.

"SEASONS of Transitions"

Like Elmgreen and Dragset whose works investigate mechanisms of ideological control in various spaces, Abrigo offers this work as a philosophical musing on the contradiction inherent in our society and the violence inflicted in the not-so-distant past.

The past for Abrigo is a wellspring not only of images of lost spaces but also of icons of time as the curse of the eternal return.

In "Terrorizing Teddy" and "Take Your Time," we see how the Nazi propagandist Joseph Goebbels and even Queen Elizabeth II crowd the workaday space of a common man, whether this is a street, the bedroom or even the patio.

Abrigo seems to be saying that, wherever we are, the world comes through and only with our eyes open can we see how everything is connected. It is with such a critical eye that Abrigo seems to reorganize power structures and underlying desire of spaces, and that's why "Seasons of Transitions" seems to reinterpret Fritz Lang's "Metropolis."

Abrigo may be young in this industry, but his insights are as old as our collective memories and, just like his name, which means "fine shelter" in Spanish, perhaps this artist is gesturing not to an escape from the madding crowd or cruel world but to a homecoming, a real space called *tahanan* in Tagalog, a place where we all stop crying as both the place and the pun in *tahan na* suggest.

In Buen Abrigo's space we shall perhaps be comforted even only for awhile.

"Escape" is on view at E-gallery, Serendra, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig. Call 9153840.

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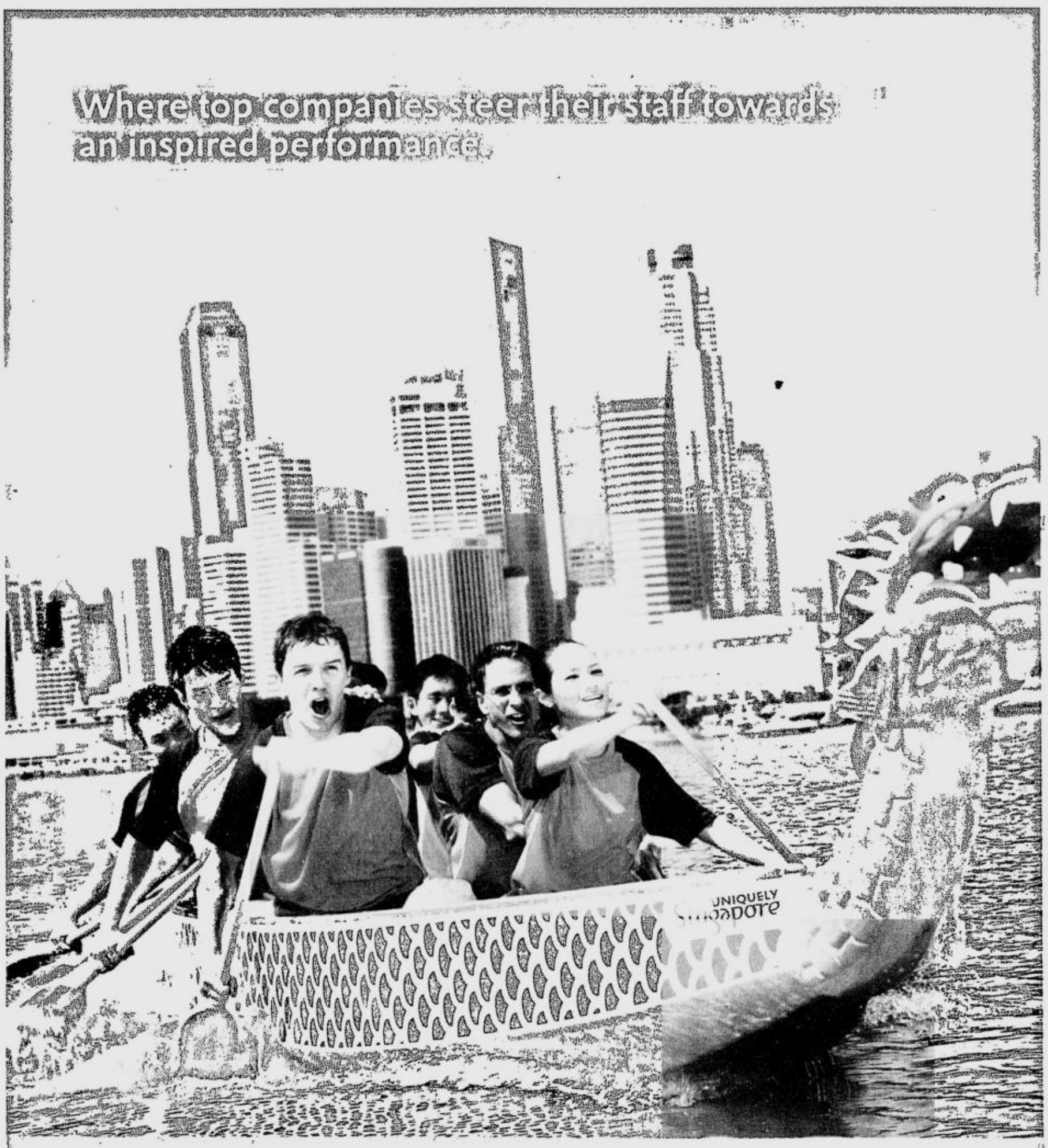
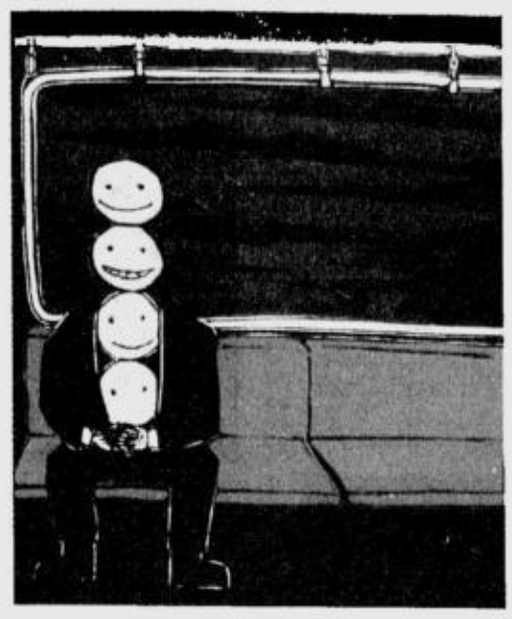
Mariano Ching prints at Serendra





"TRAVELING at Night"

MARIANO CHING IS A PAINTER, ILLUSTRATOR, photographer and printmaker. He graduated from the University of the Philippines with a degree in Fine Arts major in Painting. He is a member of the Surrounded by Water group, which ran the Surrounded by Water Galleries from the late '90s up to its closure around 2004.

Ching was also a Monbusho research scholar from 2002-2004. He studied printmaking, specializing in Japanese woodblock prints, at the Kyoto City Universtiy of Fine Arts. He has won the Philippine Board on Books for Young People prize twice for his illustrations for the storybooks "Bakit Matagal ang Sundo Ko" and "May Alaga Akong Puno."

His works have been exhibited in the Philippines, France, Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand and the United States, and belong in prestigious art collections including that of the Singapore Art Museum.

Ching recently received the Cultural Center of the Philippines Thirteen Artists Award.

His rubbercut limited-edition prints are on view at 1/of Gallery, Serendra, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig. The exhibit is in cooperation with UFO Gallery. Call 9013152

"STAR Man"

2006 AAP . . .

From page D2

dia" with its cornucopia of artistic tools and appurtenances lovingly rendered in detail. Third was Raul Agner's "Resilience," a ragtag view of Pinoy tykes in various activities, with ethnic decorative motifs surrounding the composition.

Honorable-mention winners: Michael Caraballo's "Rebirth"; Carlos Filart's "Mazebra"; Allan Dennis Santiago's "All Over"; Ma. Yasmin Doctor's "Anatomy"; and Jesusita Blancaflor Macaraeg's "At Standstill."

Photography had only a few entries, but Ronald Limayo's "Tanging Yaman" was a clear standout, with its image of a young girl doing her schoolwork on makeshift bed instead of a table, surrounded by household clutter.

RONALD Limayo's "Tanging Yaman,"

Sam Penaso's "Mall Culture," a satirical look at mall rats, was second, while Lalaine Roxas' "In the Heart of the Image" came in third.

Two honorable-mention citations went to Noel Pama's "One Way, Juan Way" and Pacifico José Jr.'s "Saan Patungo?"

The AAP Annual in December served as the grand climax in a long year devoted to competitions, hosted by the AAP, under its president, Fidel Sarmiento.

The other contests: On-the-Spot Sail Painting; Art Time; Our Time on-the-spot painting competition for a major newspaper; Nature in Abstraction: AAP-Ecca Semi-Annual Competition; and 100 Years Filipino Legacy in Hawaii: Mural Painting Competition.

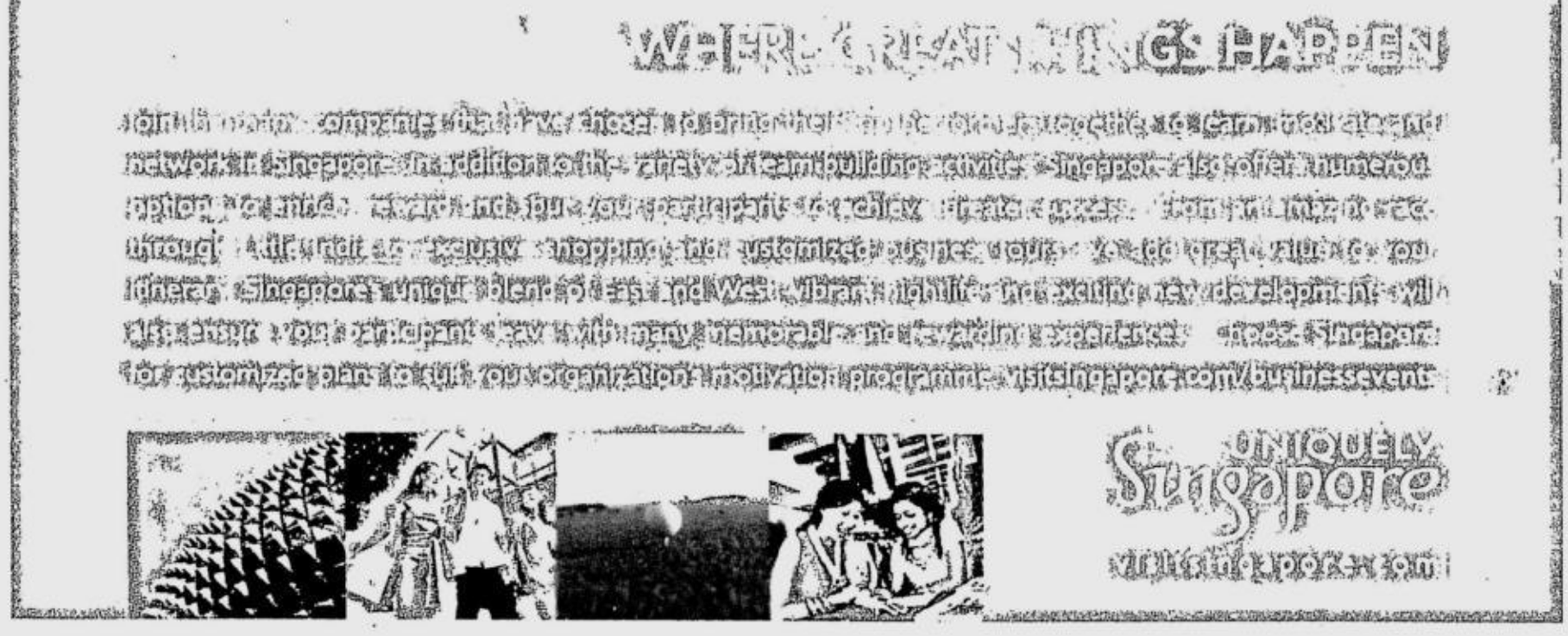
AAP also took part in exhibits here and abroad. It also toured its project, "Lakbay Sining —Alay Kulay," in Talisay, Batangas; the Pangasinan State University; and the Gawad Kalinga housing project in Lipa Batangas.

It also organized Sagip Kids for Baseco, with Pfizer Philippines.

It was, in the final reckoning, a memorable, though critical, year for art. The Year of the Pig will be worth celebrating, in grand fashion, with the AAP finally becoming a senior citizen.

May the AAP have a truly fulfilling 60th year!

E-mail author at gdormiendo@yahoo.com



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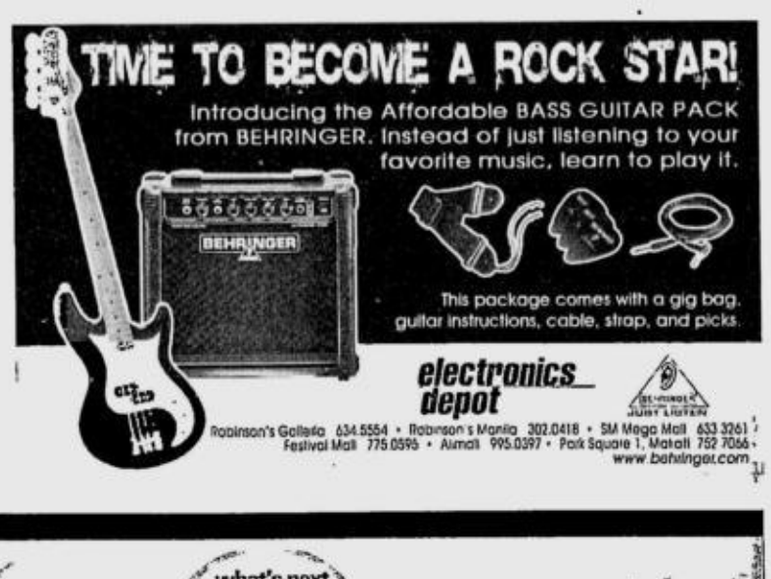


One year after the stampede

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

Willie Revillame says he went to the morgues so he could apologize to all 71 who died

PHOTO BY RYAN LIM

IN WILLIE REVILLAME'S dressing room in the ABS-CBN studios is a big brown sofa that also serves as a bed.

The "Wowowee" host jokes that he practically lives in the studio, 24-7.

You get the feeling he's serious.

He admits that he stayed in the dressing room for weeks after a very public breakup with his wife, model Liz Almoro.

Although he has since found a home in the outskirts of Quezon City, he still spends a lot of time here.

"I hang around [the studio] after the show, just in case I need to meet with the staff," he says.

Quite tellingly, the network didn't choose to celebrate the noontime game show's second anniversary yesterday, as it coincided with the first anniversary of the tragedy at the PhilSports Arena (formerly Ultra, in Pasig City), which killed 71 audience members in a stampede.

Willie says he didn't make plans himself.

"But we had a Mass with the network's big bosses (Gabby Lopez and Charo Santos, among others) and some of the families (of the victims) earlier today (on Feb. 2)," he explains.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

He decided not to attend the Mass, though. "I was afraid I'd get too emotional. *Kasi dinadala ko 'yan e* (I still carry that inside me)."

Even so, he later insists that he has recovered from what he once described as a "nightmarish" ordeal.

He recounts for INQUIRER Entertainment: "I went to the morgue [in the stampede aftermath]. I wasn't afraid. I said sorry to each corpse, all 71 of them. *Nanay, Tatay, humihingi po ako ng paumanhin, ng tawad, hindi po namin gusto ang nangyari.* (Mother, Father, I seek your forgiveness. We didn't want any of this to happen). No one knows that I did this because no one else was allowed inside the morgue. I actually talked with the dead."

He also recounts that, at the various wakes, he felt thoroughly conflicted whenever the families asked him to pose for snapshots beside the coffins.

"I remember asking myself: Why did we have to meet this way? But I can never forget the daughter of one of the victims. She told me that her mother had a manicure before going to the Ultra. She said her mom had wanted to look her best, in case she got to meet me. So that if she got close enough to hold me, her hands would be soft and beautiful. That was because her mom was a laundry woman."

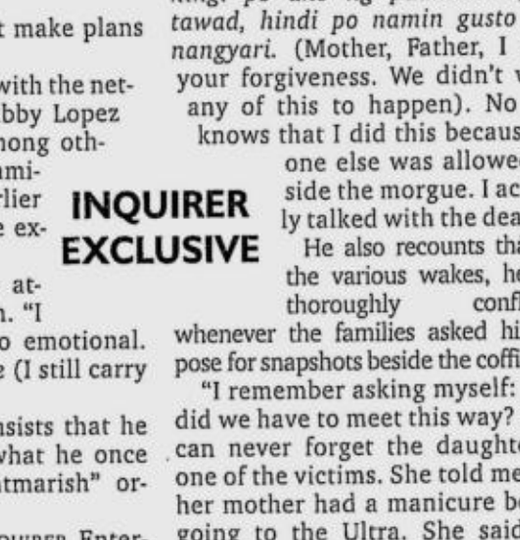
Willie says that it is the victims' stories that sustain him to this day.

He asserts, "I'm okay now. After the stampede, so many things have happened. So many trials and crises in my personal life and in my career. Problems about the show. My family."

He sighs. "But that's life. What is important is to learn from that unfortunate incident. That we should take all the precautions. We should double check, triple check everything. I think these lessons are not just for 'Wowowee,' not just for ABS-CBN. It's for all the producers of shows (and other big events). It's a reminder for everyone in the industry. We should value the people who watch our shows and do everything to secure their safety."

Bakekang not sitting pretty

By Nini Valera



It's hard work for Sunshine Dizon, and she's glad viewers appreciate her efforts

THE ACTRESS in her "most challenging role"

BATANGAS CITY—The scene: a disaster at sea. A boat sinks, and Bakekang and her two daughters, Crystal and Charming, are among the passengers. Who will Bakekang save?

"We don't know what will happen next," says Sunshine Dizon, 23, who plays the title role in the GMA prime time soap, "Bakekang."

"Knowing the character of Bakekang, she will probably save Crystal, because it's Crystal who makes the money," offers Yasmien Kurdi, who plays the ugly Charming to Lovi Poe's pretty Crystal. "Bakekang is *mukhang pera*, and it's natural for her to follow her instincts."

Long wait

Taping the episode is no breeze for the three stars. They have been on the set since 6 a.m. Friday, and 12 hours later, the scene has yet to be shot.

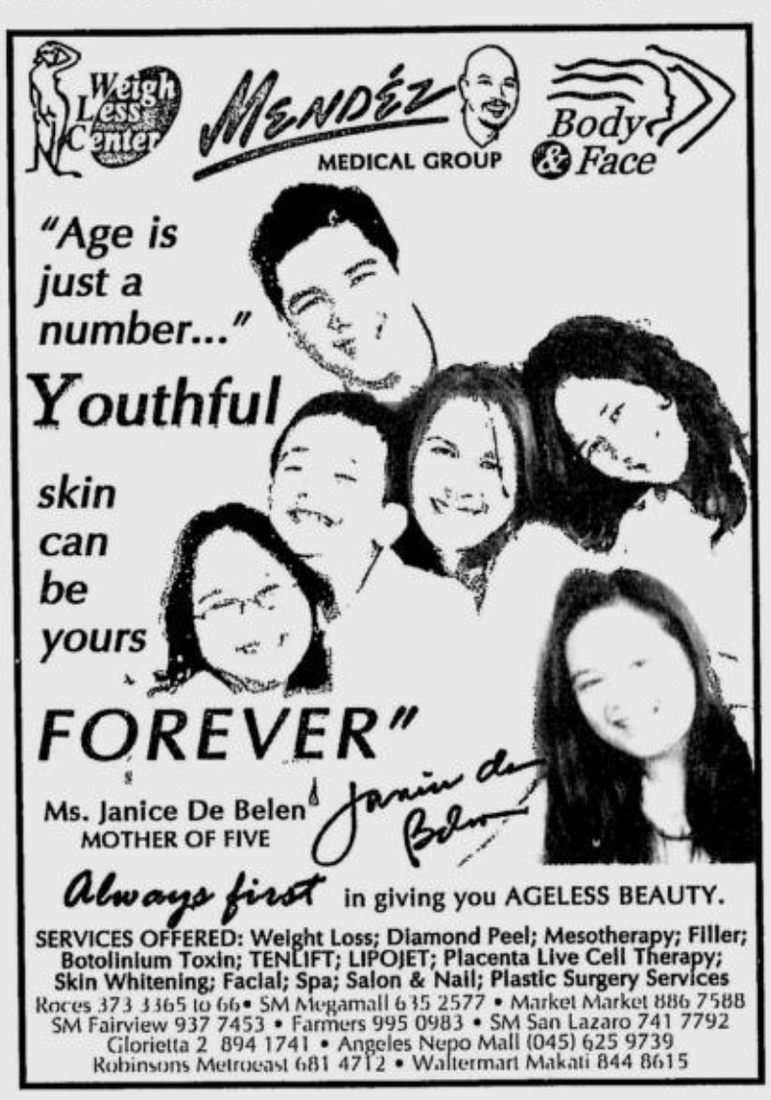
But no one is complaining.

"I have lived all my life near a beach," says Kurdi, who was born in Kuwait and lived there until she was 8. "So I'm looking forward to diving into the water."

Poe, who says she loves her role, is more subdued.

"I will get busy with my next record album when this is

BAKEKANG/ E3



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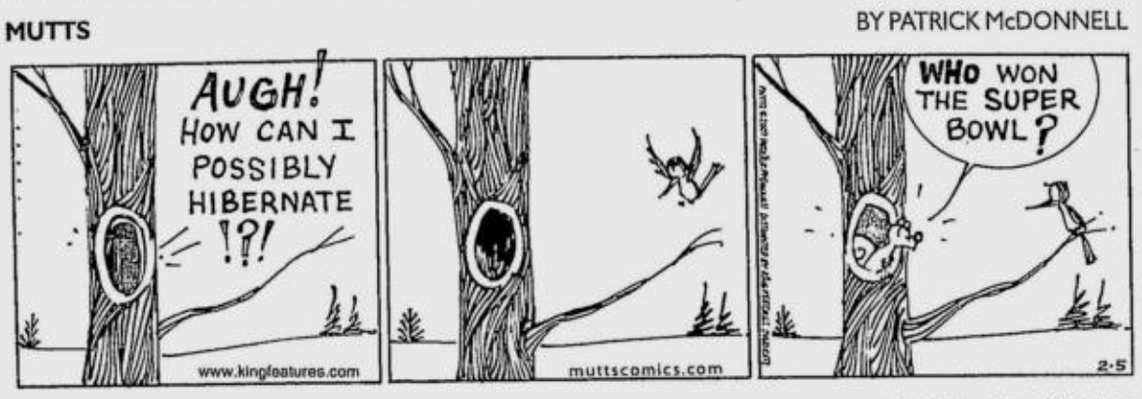
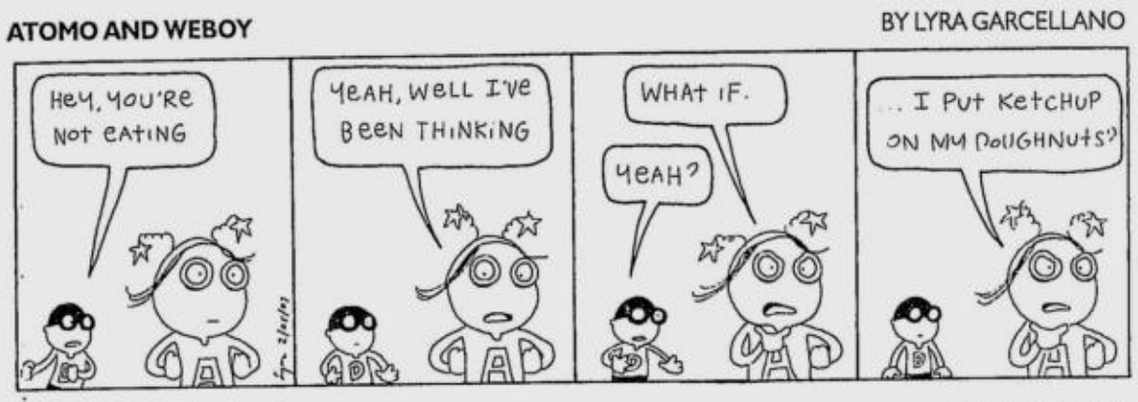


LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO



DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

ST. FRANCIS OF ASSISI TAMING SOME WILD ANIMALS

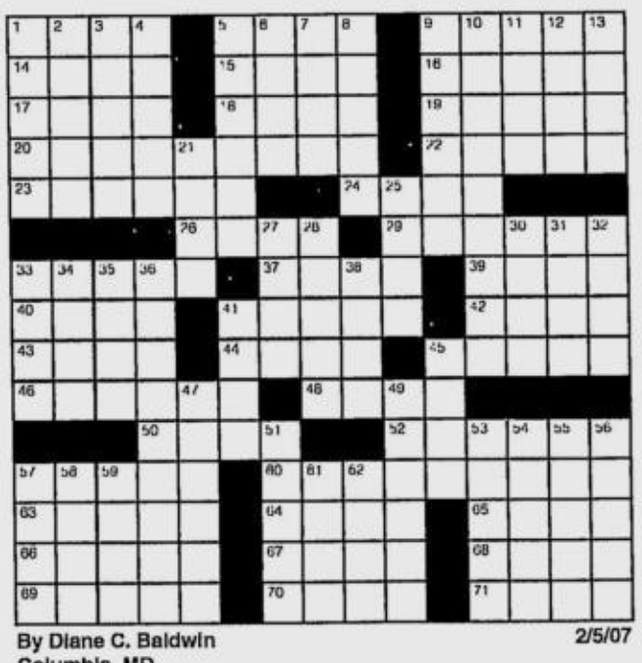
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Diane C. Baldwin
Columbia, MD

2/5/07

ACROSS
1 Surface layer of impurities
5 Despicable
9 Orang's relative
14 Highway channel
15 Utopian spot
16 Stashes away
17 Machu Picchu honcho
18 Promising clue
19 Mythical strongman
20 Rich dessert
22 Hardy wheat
23 Sporting dog
24 File fillers
26 Supermodel Kate
29 Breakfast fare
33 Cow catcher
37 Corduroy feature
39 Wheel shaft
40 Sought-after star
41 Market figures
42 Way to lose weight
43 Book before Nehemiah
44 Imitated
45 __ and bounds
46 Profoundly
48 Astor or Martin
50 Just average
52 __ in stone
57 Stocking stuffer
60 Point of a joke
63 Braid
64 Arboretum sight
65 Nave's neighbor
66 H
67 Conscious selves
68 Veggie with eyes
69 Use a poker
70 Cozy hideaways
71 Weeders' tools

DOWN
1 Inadvertent mistakes
2 Hiawatha's craft
3 Not mowed
4 Had in mind
5 Catchy closure
6 Creative flash
7 Secrecy breach
8 All over
9 Unsullied
10 Disc jockey's broadcast
11 Gathering dust
12 Mill morsels
13 Subtle alert
21 Showroom car
25 Crack shots
27 Equal exchange
28 Witch trials town
30 Way out
31 Nautical direction
32 Why don't we?
33 Told a whopper
34 Wood-shaping tool
35 Smarting
36 Comedy genre
38 Swan lady
41 States
45 Folk tale
47 Detest
49 School break
51 __ out (declined)
53 Come into conflict
54 River horse
55 Follow as a result
56 Land documents
57 Bath and Ems, for example
58 Came down
59 U.S.-Eur. alliance
61 Press
62 Sign gas

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

C	A	D	E	T		A	R	E		A	N	N	E	S
A	R	D	O	R		P	E	R		S	H	I	R	E
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V	O	N		C	O	N	T	R	A	V	E	N	E	S
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2/5/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: They broke the mold after they made you. You're definitely an individualist of the first order. You're extremely intelligent and well-spoken. You're also convincing, especially when you mean business. (Look out!) You never hesitate to express your opinions. The year ahead is exciting because it is full of fresh possibilities and new avenues. **Birthdate of:** Jennifer Jason Leigh, actress; Laura Linney, actress; Barbara Hershey, actress.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Discussions with coworkers might be intense today; in part, this is because equipment breakdowns create confusion and extra work. Just cope as best you can. Avoid arguments.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Parents need to be extra patient with children today. Similarly, lovers and romantic partners should be extra patient with each other. This is because emotions are very intense today.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Avoid intense discussions with family members or partners. People think they know best today, and they want to make over others or improve them. (Nobody likes this.)

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Even though you see better ways of doing things, others might resist your recommendations. Don't take this personally. A good idea does not always sell itself. (Them's the breaks.)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You can be extravagant, especially when spending for children, gifts or fun and pleasure-loving occasions. Don't be too obsessed about trying to do this today. Relax.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): You have sudden urges and impulses today that seem to grab you by the throat. Deal with your feelings honestly. They have less power over you if you don't hide from them.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): In a strange way, today you're better able to go inside yourself and find out what you really want. This is important. Once you know what you want, then you know what to aim for.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Be careful not to get involved in using guilt or jealousy to manipulate somebody else. Even though you're determined to get your way, operate aboveboard and take the high road.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Avoid disagreements with bosses and parents. People are entrenched in their views today! (And there are none so deaf as those who are wearing headphones.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Avoid religious and political arguments today. People have strong urges to try to convince others or reform them. "No one expects the Spanish Inquisition!"

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): It's OK if you don't want to lend someone something today. Everyone wants to hold on to whatever they have. It's just that kind of day.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Conversations with parents, bosses, partners and close friends might be unusually intense today. Situations could force emotional confrontations. This is not a good day for this sort of thing, because feelings are running too high.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			9				6	5
		9		8	3			2
	8				4	9		
9				3		4	8	
	4		1		7		3	
	1	6		5				7
		1	3				2	
8			6	7		3		
7	5				9			

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Difficulty Level ★

2/05

HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	9	3	7	6	5	2	1	8
7	8	2	3	1	9	4	5	6
5	6	1	4	8	2	3	9	7
2	3	5	8	7	4	1	6	9
6	1	4	9	5	3	7	8	2
8	7	9	6	2	1	5	3	4
3	2	8	1	4	6	9	7	5
1	5	6	2	9	7	8	4	3
9	4	7	5	3	8	6	2	1

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

E3

Bakekang not . . .

From page E1

over," she tells us.

Dizon, for her part, finds it "very flattering" that people already call her "Bakekang" in public.

"This means I have affected them, and that I have been effective in playing the role," she notes, describing her role as the most challenging so far.

"I'm only 23, and the role is too mature for me. She's a mother and I have never been a mother. So I guess, I have given the role justice, that I have become Bakekang."

But there's a downside to being popular.

Network rivalry

In a recent live performance in Iloilo City, Dizon recalls, she was upset over the "shabby treatment" she got from the rival network.

"The two networks previously had an agreement that we would get half of the one-hour show, and they would get the other half," she relates to INQUIRER Entertainment. "They were in a hurry to get their show done because they had a plane to catch so we told them to go ahead, but they refused. So I took my turn and sang. I was supposed to sing two numbers. After one song, I was interviewed by the host, someone from GMA 7's local station. During the interview, her microphone was cut. The talents from the other network already wanted to go onstage. But we weren't done yet."

She continues: "I was about to sing my next song when the host of the other network asked the audience if they liked the show being aired on their network. I felt that was rude. I was still onstage. I went ahead and sang my song. I sensed from the crowd's reaction that something else was going on. Then I realized that the next singer from the other network had already entered to perform. But I still finished my song, and the host from the other network thanked me. That was the first time the host acknowledged my presence on stage."

Slighted

Dizon admits she was slighted.

"You just don't do that to a colleague," she says. "There's such a thing as ethics even in show biz. I heard that the other singer had apologized, that he said he was sorry if someone was offended and that he was only doing his job. I know about doing a job, but it doesn't mean that you have to be rude in doing it."

The talent from ABS-CBN was Matt Evans, one of the stars of mini-series "Pedro Penduko."

Like Dizon, Evans has appeared on national TV to explain his side.

But Dizon stresses that no one deserves the treatment that she got from Evans.

"I know he's just new in the business and that his handlers

BAKEKANG/E4

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1 DEJA VU • THX
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

6 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

2 APOCALYPTO
1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00

7 BABEL
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

3 indieSine's Featured FILM: ICU BED # 7
1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30

8 LITTLE CHILDREN
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

9 SAW 3
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

5 CHARLOTTE's WEB
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

10 AGENT X44
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 APOCALYPTO 12:35 3:40 6:45 10:00

2 BABEL 12:00 2:30
SAW 3 5:10 7:25 9:50

5 AGENT X44
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

3 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
12.30 2:50 5:10 7.30 10.00

6 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:25 10:00

4 LITTLE CHILDREN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 CHARLOTTE's WEB
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST 682-8193/682-8199

1 ROB-B-HOOD
1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00

5 SAW 3
12.50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00

6 LITTLE CHILDREN
1:20 4:00 6:40 6:40 9:10

3 APOCALYPTO
11.55 2:25 5:55 9:00

7 CHARLOTTE's WEB
11.00 1:25 3:50 6:25 9:00

4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:05

8 AGENT X44
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES 935-3231/935-3228-30

1 APOCALYPTO
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
1:30 3:55 6:20 8:40

2 APOCALYPTO
2.40 5:35 8:30

3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
12:55 3:20 5:45 6:10

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4 FRAGILE

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2 APOCALYPTO
3 AGENT X44
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

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2 AGENT X44
3 DECK THE HALLS
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

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4 AGENT X44

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3 AGENT X44
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6 APOCALYPTO

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3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 A GOOD YEAR
5 AGENT X44
6 FEAST

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2 AGENT X44
3 A GOOD YEAR
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
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3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 BABEL
5 AGENT X44
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO/ AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
PREMIERE CINEMA
RESERVED
CENTERSTAGE
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CINEMA 1
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CINEMA 2
CHARLOTTE'S WEB
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2 DEJA VU
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO/ AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 BABEL
CHARLOTTE'S WEB
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
8 BLOOD DIAMOND
AGENT X44
10 ROB-B-HOOD
ERAGON
12 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 BABEL
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
5 DEJA VU
6 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
7 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
8 AGENT X44
9 RESERVED
10 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
11 ROB-B-HOOD
12 ERAGON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 DEJA VU
3 ERAGON
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
5 ROB-B-HOOD
6 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
7 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
8 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
9 AGENT X44
10 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11 BLOOD DIAMOND
12 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
2 AGENT X44
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
5 ANNAPOLIS
6 ROB-B-HOOD
ERAGON
GRIDIRON GANG
BLOOD DIAMOND
10 DEJA VU

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
5 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
6 AGENT X44

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1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 BABEL
6 ERAGON
7 DEJA VU
8 AGENT X44
9 ROB-B-HOOD

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 AGENT X44
4 ERAGON

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NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CHARLOTTE'S WEB
4 DEJA VU
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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BABEL
ERAGON
10 ROB-B-HOOD
11 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
AGENT X44

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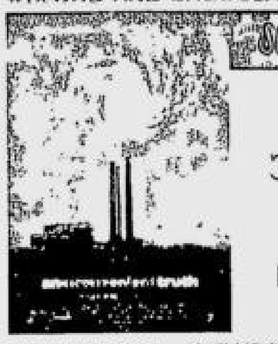
2 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD
AGENT X44
ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
TENACIOUS D
AGENT X44
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
ERAGON
BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
AGENT X44

SM movietime exclusive presents



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an inconvenient truth

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LUZON

SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
ERAGON
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
5 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
6 AGENT X44
7 ROB-B-HOOD
DEJA VU

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 AGENT X44
6 DECK THE HALLS

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 AGENT X44
3 SHAKE, RATTLE & ROLL 8
4 SUPER NOYPI

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 LIGALIG
3 AGENT X44
4 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637601-05
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 AGENT X44
4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
5 DECK THE HALLS
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

SM CIY LIPA (043) 756-7925
1 FRAGILE
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 AGENT X44
4 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
AGENT X44
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
FEAST
BLOOD DIAMOND

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
AGENT X44
3 FRAGILE
BLOOD DIAMOND

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3160
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 AGENT X44
3 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
TENACIOUS D

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5341265-66
AGENT X44
2 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
BLOOD DIAMOND
2 RESERVED
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
CHARLOTTE'S WEB
6 DEJA VU
AGENT X44
8 ERAGON

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
ROB-B-HOOD
2 RESERVED
GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
4 AGENT X44
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 RESERVED
8 A GOOD YEAR

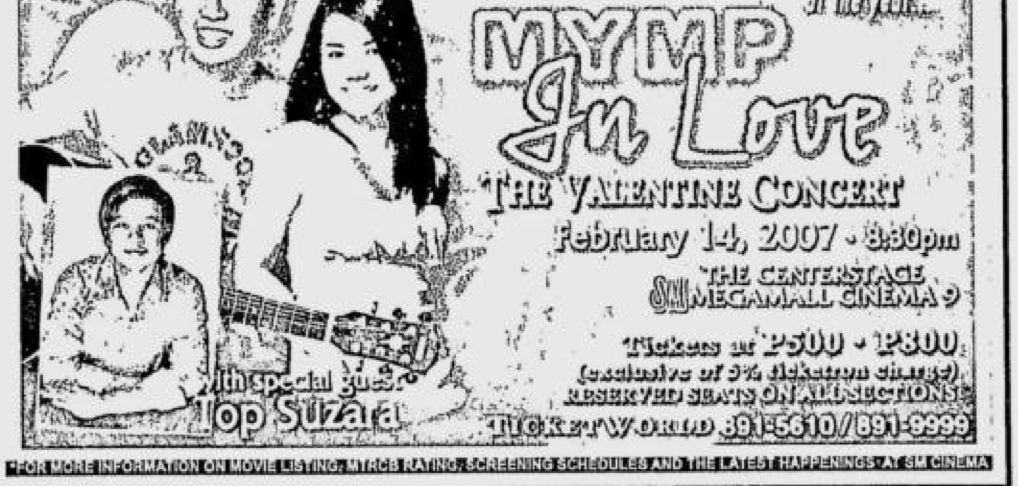
SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 AGENT X44
4 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD
5 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
6 A GOOD YEAR

SM CITY CAGAYAN (088)859-2884
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 ERAGON
3 AGENT X44
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM

SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

SHOWTIME EVENT CALENDAR

MAXMEDIA presents



MYMP In Love
THE VALENTINE CONCERT
February 14, 2007 • 8:30pm
THE CENTERSTAGE SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 9
Tickets at P500 • P800
(exclusive of 5% ticketnet charge)
RESERVED SEATS ON ALL SECTIONS
TICKETWORLD 891-5610/891-9999

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

Bakekang not sitting pretty

From page E3

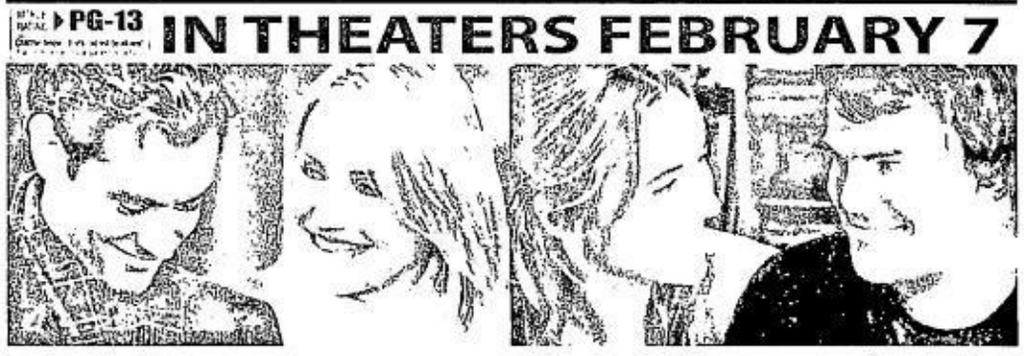
should have advised him," she says. "But some things couldn't be taught—some things like ethics and being polite."

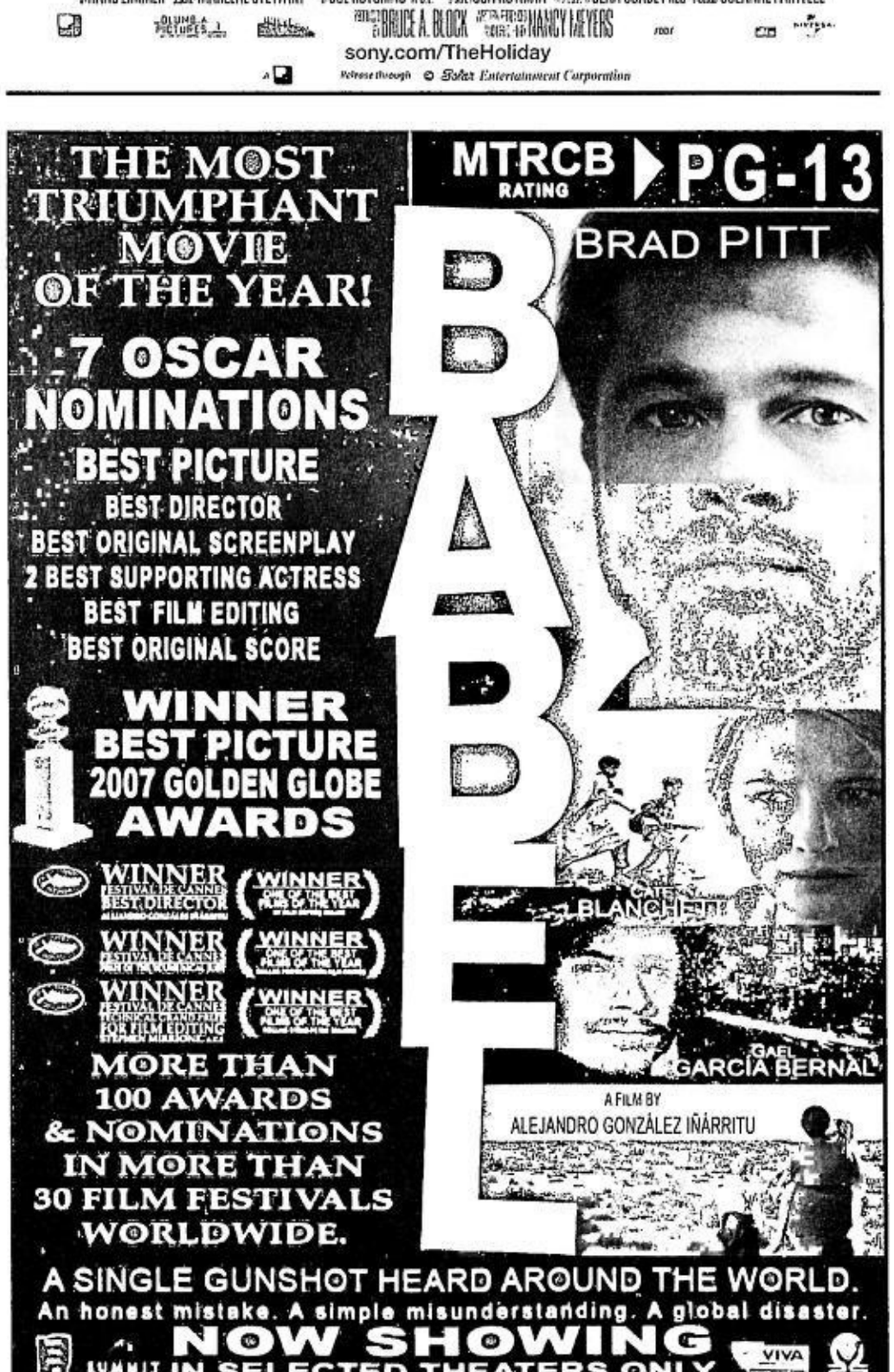
Shortly after the interview, Dizon is set to take a plunge to shoot the rescue scene.

Even if she has a body double, the actress says she is prepared to step into the cold water.

Just another day in the life of Bakekang.

BEHIND THE SCENES. Sunshine Dizon (center) with Lovi Poe (left) and Yasmien Kurdi





THE POLAR bear on "Animal Planet"

Up close & dangerous

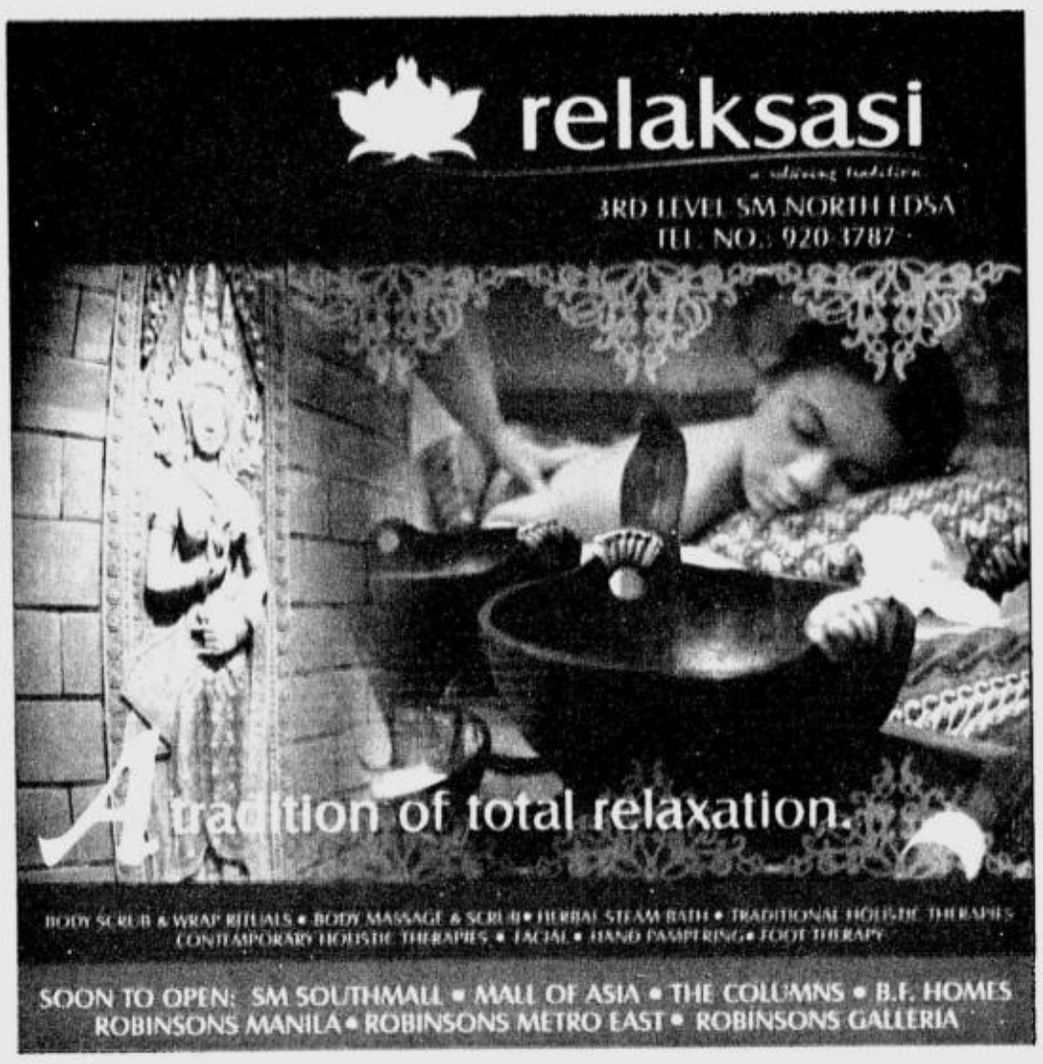
AN ANIMAL IN THE WILD, POWERful and agitated, gets a little too close to the host or cameraman—such an unforgettable moment is sure to grip viewers' attention.

Animal Planet's new series, "Up Close and Dangerous," sends viewers on an exhilarating safari with some of the world's most acclaimed wildlife filmmakers whose encounters with their subjects change from breathtaking to alarming in an instant.

The wildlife filmmakers tell their stories and share harrowing footage of charging elephants, shark attacks, close encounters with snakes, lions and tigers.

On premiere night, Feb. 12, focus is on the African elephant, polar bear and buffalo. The gripping images of the African elephant nearly cost camera operator Peter Coleman his life. In the Canadian Arctic, one of the bears attacks filmmaker Adam Ravetch's Inuit guide. And again in Africa, Sophie Darlington, while filming lions, offends a buffalo.

Episodes encore every Sunday at noon.



"Sun keeps things rolling by saving us almost ₱40,000 a month."

Surprising isn't it? That even the President of Nissan, U.N. Ave., Manila can give so much time and attention to the tiniest of details. Details, which Leo thinks about everyday, surrounded by mini versions of the cars he sells. Keeping track of the small things like phone bills, is one reason why he switched to Sun.

"I was intrigued by the 24/7 Call & Text Unlimited service. I felt it would help us cut costs and be more efficient. Especially now that times are challenging, we really have to be concerned about expenses." And as information gets around faster, customers get what they want, just the way they want it. Sun excels at services that are tailor-fit to your business.

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Appeal of love

MAYBE MOVIE PRODUCERS KNOW SOMEthing we ordinary mortals don't. Ever since the very early years of filmmaking, love and romance have been major staples in the movies, and their appeal remains strong to this day.

Maybe it's all silly, palpitating flash and fluff—or not. Maybe this discussion isn't shallow after all, but psychologically plugs into some basic and even primal forces that have driven mankind since the dawn of time.

Like, the need for love to focus lust into the driving force that assures continued procreation in the monogamous context of a family, which is needed for the survival of the species?

In any case, the love-lust team-up in films has been focused even more productively by another tandem—the movie love theme, which producers have serially created to increase the profitability of romance in the movies.

In other words, if an actor and actress exudes the "chemistry" to make a romantic film a hit, their "dream team" can be used in movie after movie, to keep the profits coming!

Thus, very early on, the movie world developed its **Katharine Hepburn-Spencer Tracy** and **Rogelio dela Rosa-Carmen Rosales** tandems, whose joint starrers made money for decades on end.

Later, in Filipino movies, the **Gloria-Luis, Nida-Nestor, Nora-Tirso, Vilma-Edgar, Snooky-Albert, Maricel-William** and **Jolina-Marvin** tandems all

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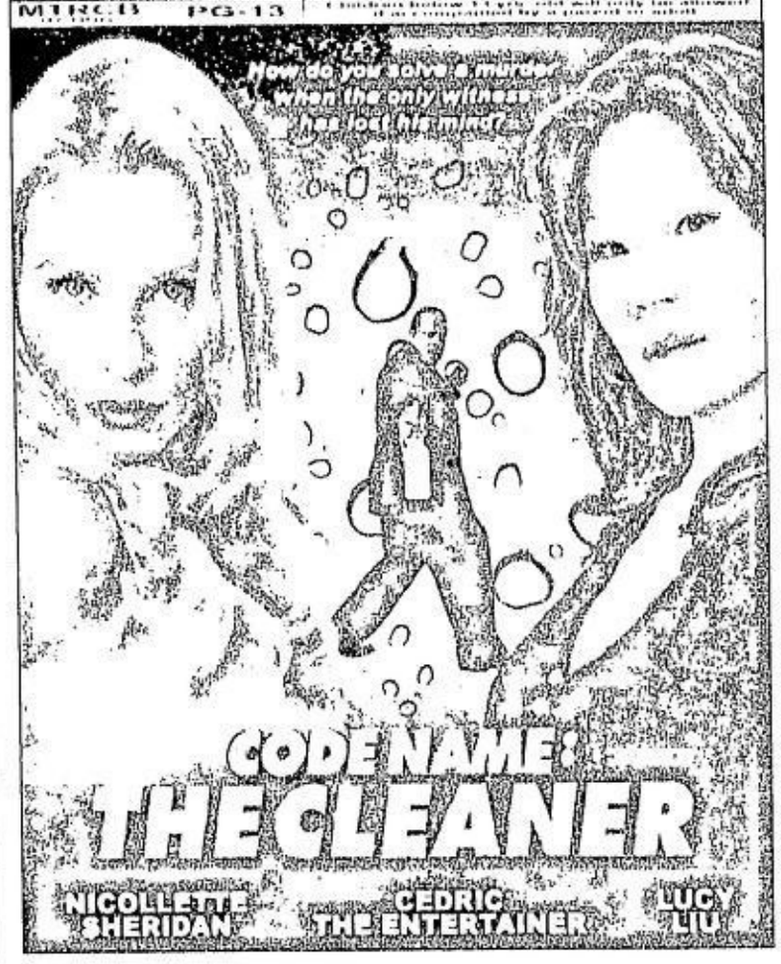
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City
To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedules post text eastwood and send to 2948 for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers
For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:55, 11:10
G

2 APOCALYPTO
2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10
R-18

3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00
G

4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00
PG-13

OPENS ON WEDNESDAY
MTRCB PG-13


OPENS FEBRUARY 7
MTRCB R-13 STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS AND UP

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

MTRCB R RESTRICTED Strictly for ADULTS No one below 18 yrs. may be admitted
"PURE THRILL
A relentless, exhilirating, brilliantly paced action-adventure."
★★★★½
- Jim Schembri, The Age
"UNFORGETTABLE.
Mel Gibson's greatest achievement yet."
- Urban Cinefile
"BRILLIANT. A MASTERPIECE.
The best film of the year."
- Films in Review
OSCAR NOMINEE
MEL GIBSON'S
APOCALYPTO
NO ONE CAN OUTRUN THEIR DESTINY.
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ARANETA CENTER
Gateway Mall Farmers Plaza
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Gateway CINEPLEX 10
DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

APOCALYPTO 12:40 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 9:50	NEVERWAS 12:40 / 3:00 / 5:20 / 7:40 / 10:00	HOLLYWOODLAND 1:25 / 4:15 / 7:05 / 9:55
BABEL 12:20 / 3:20 / 6:20 / 9:20	CHARLOTTE'S WEB 12:00 / 2:20 / 4:40 / 7:00 / 9:20	BLOOD & CHOCOLATE 12:00 / 3:05 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:50
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 11:50 / 2:20 / 4:50 / 7:20 / 9:50	AGENT X-44 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	SAW 3 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50
		APOCALYPTO 12:00 / 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00

Gateway MALL 5

BLOOD & CHOCOLATE 12:05 R3 / 1:40 / 3:55 / 6:10 / 8:25	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 12:20 / 2:30 / 5:30 / 8:00	APOCALYPTO 2:10 R5 / 1:50 / 4:50 / 7:50
AGENT X-44 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	LITTLE CHILDREN 12:30 / 3:00 / 5:30 / 8:00	DOLBY DIGITAL SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM
SHARON CUNETA - MY MEGA VALENTINE 2
February 10, Saturday 8 pm
CLIFF RICHARD " Here and Now Tour 2007"
February 13, Tuesday 8 pm

MTRCB PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
They say children see what adults do not.
But no one listens. No one believes.
Now, no one will live.
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& PRODUCER OF THE GRUDGE SERIES
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THE MESSENGERS
OPENS FEBRUARY 7
VIVA

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MOVIE GUIDE
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CINEPLEX
1 APOCALYPTO
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BABEL
PREMIERE
BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, China Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 APOCALYPTO
3 AGENT X 44
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266180
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
5 RESRVED

metropolis starmall
www.clickbuzy.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504285, 8433894
1 AGENT X 44
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 APOCALYPTO

THEATRES
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena tel. (042) 660 6271
AGENT X 44
BLOOD DIAMOND
RESRVED
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Fillnvest
FESTIVAL MALL
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 BABEL
2 KABAL KASALI KASALO
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 APOCALYPTO
5 BLOD CHOCOLATE
6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
8 SAW - 3
9 ROB-B-HOOD
10 AGENT X 44

Blue Wave
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Oli Fernando Street, Sto. Nino, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 APOCALYPTO
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334229
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 APOCALYPTO
3 AGENT X 44
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
5 LITTLE CHILDREN

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SAW - 3
2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 AGENT X 44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449348)
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 BLOOD DIAMOND

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5003 to 03
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 APOCALYPTO
3 GRIFFEN & PHOENIX
4 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 AGENT X 44
2 ROB-B-HOOD

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 APOCALYPTO
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 AGENT X 44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Binan) tel. (049) 4111140
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 MANO PO - 6
2 AGENT X 44
3 ERAGON

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Pandal) tel (044) 795.3320
1 NIGHT AT THE MUGEUM
2 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 AGENT X 44
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 ERAGON
2 KAMABUTHA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 TENACIOUS-D
2 BOGOGO GARADO
3 PARAISO SA DUBAI
4 FRAGILE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 DOA
2 BEDROOM SECRET
3 AGENT X 44
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 KANIBAL

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0750
1 LITTLE CHILDREN
2 AGENT X 44
3 KARELASYON
4 FRAGILE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 KAMASUTRA

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

teams remains strong to this day

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

sent their movies' producers laughing merrily to the bank.

These thoughts come to mind, because love teams have once again become popular and profitable of late. Some hit movies have been energized by their stellar love tandems—**Regine Velasquez** and **Robin Padilla**, **Toni Gonzaga** and **Sam Milby**, **Richard Gutierrez** and **Angel Locsin**, and most recently of all, **Judy Ann Santos** and **Ryan Agoncillo** in "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo."

The romantic format may be as old as the movie hills, but new love teams render it fresh and ever "new."

Much of it is an illusion, but there are many viewers out there who are only too willing to be cinematically and romantically deceived!

"Seduction with consent" is very much a part of the unspoken covenant between viewer and filmmaker, and it all makes a sexy kind of sense.

Because, if you think about it, seduction, procreation and propagation of the species do go together like a horse and carriage, or like love and marriage—and annulment?

What is it about today's hit love teams that accounts for their appeal to movie fans? Regine-Robin profitably go the love-hate route. Sam-Toni are less feisty but similarly combative. Angel-Richard are more traditionally, sweetly lovey-dovey, the new millenium's version of Gloria-Luis.

As for Juday-Ryan, the success of their first romantic starrer together is regarded as a big deal in film circles, because theirs is the only "real as well as reel" love tandem. So, the fact that "Kasal" hit it big means that the public "approves" of their real-life relationship.

This is deemed crucial because, even after they get married, viewers would still feel like "supporting" their follow-up starrers with their avid patronage.

Is it any wonder, then, that the sequel of "Kasal" is already on the drawing boards? Tentatively entitled "Sakal, Sakali, Saklolo," it could click with viewers even if its stars get hitched in real life in the interim!

DID YOU KNOW...

LONDON—British book retailer Waterstone's is hoping to set up a help line for distressed fans of the popular Harry Potter series because two characters will be killed off in the final instalment. The Daily Telegraph reported over the weekend. The seventh and final edition of British author J.K. Rowling's hit series—"Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows"—becomes available in July. *AFP*

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"Two thumbs way up."
★★★★
"This is one of the year's best films!"
"... MAGIC ..."
★★★★
"BRILLIANT!"
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Rockwell Center, Makati City | Tel. No: 8981440-41 | DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND EX

BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM G 12:30,3:00	CHARLOTTE'S WEB G 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM G 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30	BABEL PG13 1:40,4:30,7:20,10:10	APOCALYPTO R18 1:55,4:40,7:35,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR VERIFICATION CALL 729-7777
MATINEE 110.00 FREE SEATING SCREENING BEFORE 5:00P.M. - MONDAY-FRIDAY

SHANG CINEPLEX
1 APOCALYPTO MTRCB R-18 1:00, 4:00, 7:00, 10:00
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB MTRCB GP 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM MTRCB GP 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00
4 BABEL MTRCB PG-13 5:45, 8:00
PREMIERE THEATRE: BLOOD & CHOCOLATE MTRCB PG-13 12:40, 3:00, 5:20
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Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

G1	1 APOCALYPTO	2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	3 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	4 AGENT X44
G4	1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	2 BABEL	3 THX APOCALYPTO GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 HOLLYWOODLAND	5 STRANGER THAN FICTION	6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	7 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
GB1	1 APOCALYPTO		2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	
GB3	1 THX NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX APOCALYPTO GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 HOLLYWOODLAND GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BABEL GUARANTEED SEATS	5 CHARLOTTE'S WEB GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC	1 THX APOCALYPTO GUARANTEED SEATS		2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	
	3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	5 BABEL	
ACC	1 APOCALYPTO	2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
M2	1 APOCALYPTO		2 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	
	3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	4 AGENT X44	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	

At the Activity Center
Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm; Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm; Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm; Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324; Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Photoworld Manila February 1 to 6, 2007	Celebrate the sweet life at the Town this Valentine's w/ MYMP Live! February 10, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Philippine Arts Festival February 10, 2007	Plan Holder's Day February 5, 2007

Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peak presents: Collection of Ana Rocha
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TIMEZONE
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Fallen beauty hints at childhood abuse

NEW YORK—FALLEN BEAUTY queen, Miss USA Tara Conner, said she had witnessed abuse as a child and that may have driven her into a life of alcohol and drugs but that she still believed she could be a good role model.

Conner, 21, came close to losing her crown last month because of her wild behavior but was given a second chance by real estate tycoon and reality TV star, Donald Trump, owner of the Miss USA contest, after she agreed to enter a rehabilitation program.

RUSHES

In her first interview since emerging from a month in rehab, Conner said her problems may have

TARA CONNER

stemmed from some unspecified abuse during her childhood with someone she recently confronted. She would not comment on whether this abuse was sexual. "It's something I would like to speak with my family about first," she told NBC television's "Today" show in the interview broadcast on Thursday. *Reuters*

Ang Lee gives back

HONG KONG—Oscar-winning director Ang Lee grew up in Taiwan and started his career there before moving on to Hollywood. Now he wants to give back to the tiny island's movie industry.

Lee and younger brother and fellow filmmaker Lee Kang have launched a program to cultivate Taiwanese directors by funding them and providing help in marketing, the brother Lee Kang told The Associated Press Friday in a phone interview.

ANG LEE

"We'll produce for the directors ... so they focus on being directors. We'll plan their marketing for them," the younger Lee said. He also said he wants to train directors in making commercial movies and counter Taiwan's preference for art-house cinema.

He said Ang Lee ("Brokeback Mountain," "Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon") will serve as an artistic consultant, focusing on developing the scripts of chosen directors. *AP*

Sienna, not Meryl

NEW YORK—After being hounded by tabloids about her private life, especially her relationship with ex-fiance Jude Law, Sienna Miller wants the focus to be on her acting and burgeoning career.

The New York-born 25-year-old English actress has her biggest role yet in the film biography "Factory Girl," which is being released in the United States this week.

SIENNA MILLER

She plays the title role—pop artist Andy Warhol's short-term muse Edie Sedgwick, who grabbed attention in the 1960s displaying an outlandish fashion style while hanging off the arm of a celebrity.

"It would be nice if the focus was on something other than my personal life," the blond-haired, blue-eyed Miller told Reuters.

"Factory Girl" director George Hickenlooper said the film had trouble getting financed, in part due to Miller's unknown acting skill. She had made only three previous films. Hickenlooper said at a news conference, "We were all passionate about having Sienna but she is not Meryl Streep." *Reuters*

More than hip-hop

ATLANTA—Grammy winners including Ludacris and Earl Klugh told Atlanta high school students that the music industry has plenty of different jobs to offer.

During a discussion on Wednesday at the Clark Atlanta University's Park Street Music & Art Complex, the artists advised about 300 teenagers to find their niche and show the world their own talent.

"Self-education is the most important thing to have," Ludacris said. "I know you can have street smarts. But if you combine that with book smarts, you'll be unstoppable." *AP*

Daughtry doing fine

NEW YORK—Chris Daughtry wishes people would forget his shocking elimination from last year's "American Idol." It's kind of a touchy subject.

CHRIS DAUGHTRY

"You hear one of two things: 'You were robbed' or 'You shoulda won,'" he says about attention from sympathetic fans (Taylor Hicks took home the title).

"I hate hearing it," he says. "It makes you feel like they're stuck in that moment from where you were on the show. You want them to kinda break out of that and follow you where you're at now, and see that things are fantastic and there's nothing to be upset about. Get over it, you know, because I'm doing all right." *AP*

GREENHILLS CINEMAS
THEATRE MALL
NOW SHOWING
BABEL 10:60, 1:45, 4:40, 7:35, 10:30 PG 13
BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE 11:60, 2:10, 4:25, 6:40, 9:00 PG-13
PROMENADE
APOCALYPTO 10:60, 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10 R 18
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 11:40, 2:30, 5:10, 7:40, 10:20 GP
CHARLOTTE'S WEB 10:45, 1:10, 3:30, 6:00 & 10:10 30er
Feb 7 to 9, 2007 — Ayat Inside Back to Basics — 8:30 PM
Feb 11 & 14, 2007 — Ryan Agoncillo — 8:00 PM
Feb. 16 & 17, 2007 — Pangalay Y Fuego — 8:00 PM
March 11 to 2007 — ERNA LENTSMA — 8:00 PM
EVERY MONDAY — HANGE NIGHT! — 7:00 PM
Feb 05 & 20, 2007 — DYORDIE KO PO — 8:00 PM
February 11, 2007 — LOVI POE "A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION" — 9:00 PM
Feb 13 & 14, 2007 — RAYMUND LAUDENBACH — 8:30 PM

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• Make-over at Bench Fly Salon for Two
Second Prize: Dinner Date for Two at Fish & Co. Gift Pack from Dermclinic
Third Prize: Movie Date for Two Gift Certificate from Fish & Co.
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FOR GREENBELT 1, GREENBELT 3 AT GLORIETTA, AND GLORIETTA 4
• 50 Holy Cattle Kosh Popcorn • 50 Timezone Game Cards • 1 Gift Certificate from Ice Vodka Bar • 2 Gift packs from Dermclinic • 2 Gift Certificates from Fish & Co. • 5 Bench Fly Salon Gift Certificates
Promo Valid: February 1 to 14, 2007
Raffle Draw: February 19, 2007, 3:30pm with a DTI Representative
For DTI Permit No. 07-070 Series of ...
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*See promo banners for more details
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OPENS FEBRUARY 7
FROM BESTSELLING AUTHOR THOMAS HARRIS COMES THE FINAL INSTALLMENT IN THE "SILENCE OF THE LAMBS" SAGA
The Silence of the Lambs
RED DRAGON
HANNIBAL
YOU KNOW HIS METHOD.
YOU KNOW HIS APPETITE.
NOW KNOW HIS BEGINNING
GASPARD ULLIEL
GONG LI
HANNIBAL RISING

Federation celebrates 6th Pre-need Week

The Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies, Inc. (PFPPCI) embarks on another moment of its exciting annual celebration on February 5-9, 2007 opening with a Planholder's Day on February 5 at the Market! Market! Activity Center

Planholders, agents, officers of the PFPPCI, and mall-goers are expected to flood to this annual opening which will commence with a mass, and with the special performances of top celebrities of the local movie industry.

Filipinos have been witnesses to this week-long activity that is marked with artistic performances of movie stars, valuable insights from government regulators, and this year, the 2007 UNITAS awardee, President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

Pre-need is a unique Philippine concept of financial preparation for future purchases, education, and other services. It is now a multi-billion peso industry that employs more than 200,000 workers and serves millions of Planholders.

In 2001, President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo issued Proclamation No. 52 declaring the first week of February as Pre-Need Consciousness Week. Each year, pre-need participants troop to the venue of the celebration to take part in the interesting activities of one of the significant economic forces in the country.

Other highlights of the celebration are lunch meeting with the SEC Press Corps, Pre-Need Forum, Pre-Need Golf Tournament, and the Unitas Awarding of this year's grantee, President Gloria-Macapagal Arroyo.

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So what are you waiting for? Call us now at our Sales Hotline (02)753-7171 or contact your friendly Ayala Plans Business Partner today to learn more about this exciting product and other top-of-the-line pre-need plans. Your savings can definitely grow much better in greens through MydollarFundBuilder.

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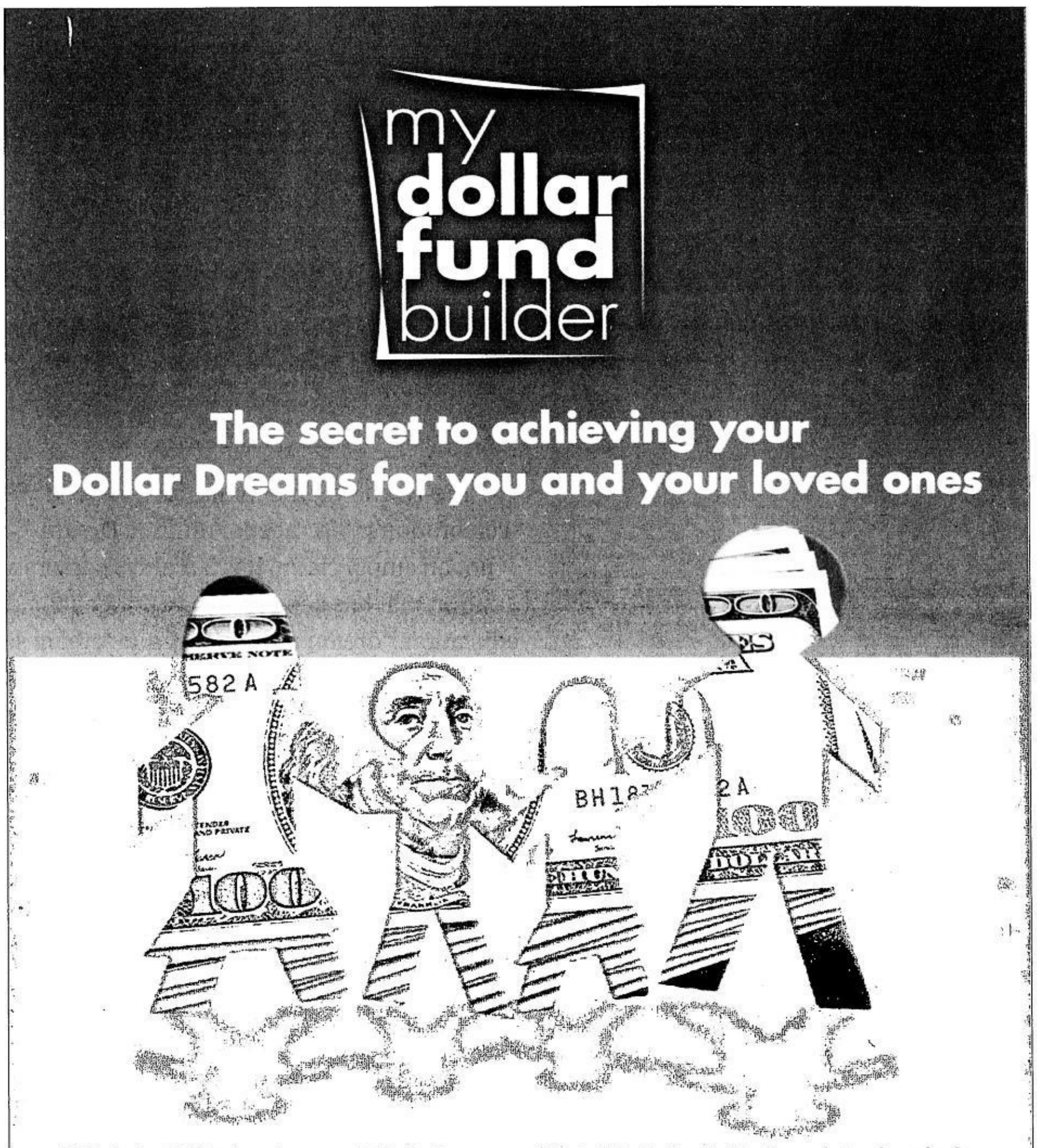

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'Pre-Need: Fulfilling Dreams'

WARMEST greetings to the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies, Inc. as you hold your 6th Pre-Need Consciousness Week.

Despite some recent setbacks, the pre-need industry has slowly regained public trust and confidence. It has worked doubly hard to deliver on its services to its clients and beneficiaries..

May this occasion with the theme, "Pre-Need: Fulfilling Dreams," inspire you to further strengthen the foundation of your industry to live up to the expectation of the Filipino people.

As a major player in the financial market and a good provider of employment opportunities for our people, your contribution to national development is unquestionable.

Mabuhay tayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

GREETINGS to the officers and members of the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Companies, Inc. (PFPPCI) as you celebrate the 6th Pre-Need Consciousness Week on February 5 to 9, 2007.

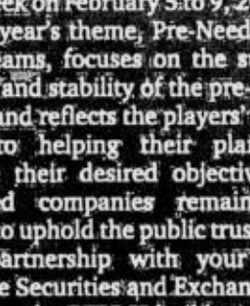
This year's theme, Pre-Need: Fulfilling Dreams, focuses on the sustained growth and stability of the pre-need industry and reflects the players' commitment to helping their planholders achieve their desired objectives. The pre-need companies remain determined to uphold the public trust.

In partnership with your regulator—the Securities and Exchange Commission—the PFPPCI builds a stronger foundation for the pre-need industry. We are confident you will overcome all the challenges brought about by the continually changing social, fiscal and monetary landscape of the nation.

The pre-need industry is an important player in the financial market and is a major contributor to the country's revenues. We hope PFPPCI will remain a government's partner in community and nation-building efforts that will benefit generations of Filipinos to come.

Thank you and congratulations.

MARGARITO "GARY" B. TEVES
Secretary
Department of Finance



GREETINGS to the officers and members of the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies, Inc. on the occasion of the 6th Pre-Need Consciousness Week!

The Securities and Exchange Commission appreciates the Federation's commitment and continuing efforts to sustain the stability and growth of the industry. Although beset by some problems, the pre-need companies have shown remarkable resilience and strength on meeting theses challenges. The SEC lauds the active participation of the Federation on the formulation of rules and regulations that will help your members meet its commitment to the public. It is timely that this year's activities and programs in observance of the Pre-Need Week are aimed at consumer protection and nation-building through generation of employment opportunities.

The SEC, as a partner in the development of the capital markets and protection of its investors, supports you in this endeavor.

Mabuhay!

FE B. BARIN
Chairperson
Securities and Exchange Commission

The Philippines at present is too far behind Japan, the United States, and some rich European countries in terms of savings per capita. Economists would claim that savings is one of the engines for a country's growth that could be used to finance investments and other development projects.

Imagine if the Philippines could save as much as the most affluent countries per person. The most logical conclusion would be that our country would get the needed propulsion to a sustainable growth.

Observers would say that it is the habit that plays a significant role in achieving high savings rate. In that aspect, it seems that Filipinos still have to work on the attitude to reverse the spending pattern.

Pre-need in its modern state is a concept that is peculiar to the Philippine setting. Its arrival into the financial scene of the country has been touted as a boon both for Filipinos and the country.

The unbreakable love affair of every family with the importance of education has been fueled further by pre-need. Quality education has become achievable even for families who, without the pre-need, would find it difficult to have the necessary funding for such education.

Pension is more of a reserved account of an individual for the future. This is one of the products offered by the Philippine pre-need. This fund goes a long way for a planholder from retirement to business ventures, or for any asset acquisition.

The memorial pre-need, although dominating the industry scene for quite some time, addresses the most pressing necessity of every family. Filipinos have realized the wisdom of saving for this eventuality.

Today, every Pinoy of the right age has been aiming to have some day at least one of these plans. In fact, for most of these modern savers, having one is a bragging right. It signifies a secure future, and is a reflection of one's healthy financial mentality.

Pre-Need has molded the Filipino psyche into the direction of habitual saving. Pre-need's presence in the country for decades has inculcated this discipline and has stamped its beneficial results into the mindset of the nation. It is seen that with a little more time, this momentum is expected to achieve perhaps the much-dreamed about national growth that Filipinos have been hoping for.

Pre-Need's 6th Year

With the issuance of Proclamation No. 52 of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo declaring the first week of February as a Pre-need Consciousness Week, the public has become more aware of the importance of pre-need.

Such awareness redounds to the understanding of the industry's ancillary benefits such as the knowledge of the significance of sound personal financial management and the elusive art of financial preparation.

Pre-Need: Fulfilling Dreams

It is true that the industry has just passed through probably the worst scenario in the book of challenges and the impact has left a bitter after-taste to the member-companies.

To the pessimist, bringing the circumstances to their extreme logical conclusion, what had followed after the crisis was oblivion, that is, pre-need is ditched in the sidelines.

But of course those who truly understand the spirit of the industry believed that what happened was a test necessary to develop the mental, emotional, and even physical maturity of this industry. Everybody now holds that Pre-need is a stable, mature, and reliable national entity.

It is not a hype. In fact, it is a much-needed help of a country that needs to educate its population about saving, investment, and financial preparation.

For decades, Pre-Need has been making dreams come true for Filipinos. Expensive realities such as elite education, fat retirement account, well-coordinated memorial services are as easy to achieve as just signing for a plan in a nearest Pre-Need company along the corner. For some, it is as hassle-free as calling a favorite agent-friend who brokers the products.

In a student population in most educational institutions, one can hardly ignore the presence of students who are scholars of pre-need, that is, those whose education is financed by the benefits derived from a pre-need company.

In the corporate world, the number of professionals who graduated from their respective universities through pre-need has been growing. Some executives, managers, and even business leaders of the present business era are alumni of pre-need education.

Personal assets such as dream houses, cars, and even businesses were achieved through pre-need. With the right pension package, an individual can enter the retirement world with so much fund to enjoy the much-deserved vacation or to finance a new business venture.

The memorial aspect has not only become more civilized but it has metamorphosed into a unique expression of love, respect, and veneration for the departed family members. The peace of mind of those left behind for some is priceless. Filipinos can now customize this service to fit every person's peculiarities. The country's high regard for the spirit of the departed loved ones can be encapsulized in a highly responsive memorial package.

Pre-Need's theme for its 6th Pre-need Week celebration is "Pre-need: Fulfilling Dreams." This is not an empty claim. It is a reality that wraps the nation that has depended on pre-need for "dream education," "dream retirement," and "dream services."

On a national level, the industry performs the most important task of developing the capital market and nation-building. It is a major source of capital for the country. It is a primordial source of tax contribution. It is an employer for more than 200,000 Filipinos today.

With more energy being put in for its sustainable growth, pre-need can become a gigantic economic juggernaut that could establish more investments, create employment, and opportunities.

Pre-need fulfills dreams not only of every Filipino, but also of a nation. This is a direction that the industry has been taking. As more confidence, support, and vision, interplay into pre-need's operation, more dreams will be achieved and more growth will be attained.

Pre-need's 6th consciousness week is intended as an awareness not of the presence of pre-need, but of its role in making dreams come true not only for every Filipino, but also for a country.

Pre-Need's theme for its 6th Pre-need Week celebration is 'Pre-need: Fulfilling Dreams'. This is not an empty claim. It is a reality that wraps the nation that has depended on pre-need for 'dream education,' 'dream retirement,' and 'dream services'

Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo named as Unitas awardee

The Philippine Federation of Pre-need Plan companies, Inc. (PFPPCI) has named Her Excellency Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the UNITAS awardee.

UNITAS, which stands for Unity, Nobility of purpose, Integrity, Trust, Action and Service, is the battlecry of the PFPPCI, and has since been an inspiration for the creation of UNITAS Awards.

This time-honored recognition is given to exemplary individuals whose achievements, professionalism, and service have been of the highest standards leading to their exceptional contribution and support of the pre-need industry.

Gloria Macaraeg Macapagal-Arroyo (born April 5, 1947) is the 14th and current president of the Philippines. She is the country's second female president after Corazon C. Aquino. She is the daughter of former President Diosdado Macapagal.

Prior to becoming president, Arroyo was the country's first female vice president.

In 2005, Arroyo was selected as the fourth most powerful woman in the world by Forbes magazine. She is ranked as number 45 on Forbes magazine's list of the World's 100 Most Powerful Women in 2006.

She attended Assumption Convent for her elementary and high school education, graduating valedictorian in 1964. Arroyo then studied for two years at Georgetown University's prestigious Walsh School of Foreign Service in Washington, DC where she was a classmate of former United States President Bill Clinton and achieved consistent Dean's list status. She then earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics from Assumption College, graduating magna cum laude in 1968.

She was elected to the Philippine Senate in 1992. As a legislator, Arroyo filed over 400 bills and authored or sponsored 55 laws of economic importance during her tenure as senator, including the Anti-Sexual Harassment Law, the Indigenous People's Rights Law, and the Export Development Act. During this time, she had already showed her excellence, innovative spirit, and resourcefulness.

Arroyo, a practicing economist, has made the economy the focus of her presidency. Economic growth in terms of gross domestic product has averaged 4.6 percent during the Arroyo presidency from 2001 up to the end of 2005. This is higher than previous recent presidents when compared to the 3.8-percent average of Aquino, the 3.7-percent average of Ramos, and the 2.8-percent average of Joseph Estrada. Inflation during the Arroyo presidency has been the lowest since 1986, averaging 5.3 percent.

In 2001, she issued Proclamation No. 52, declaring the first week of February as Pre-need Consciousness Week, she said "Pre-Need prepares the Filipino families, individuals, and communities for the future by providing them with products and services that address their needs even before these needs arise, thus allowing them to cope with the spiraling cost of living and dying."

This became the springboard of a full-blast exposure of pre-need to the Philippine market with the backing of the government. The industry was able to present the developments and trends to the Filipinos much faster and easier since more and more became acquainted with it.

Those who became beneficiaries passed on the good practice of buying pre-need products to the new generation until six years after the first pre-need week was launched, the pre-need formed part of every household's monthly budget.

With her proclamation, the people and the industry formed a union under the virtue of trust, commitment, and dedication. A better understanding of each other's behavior and the way both operate is easily achieved.

Indeed, President Arroyo's innovative and dynamic spirit was the driving force behind the sustained success of the pre-need industry. It is in this light that UNITAS Awards remembers this invaluable contribution of probably one of the greatest proponents of the pre-need concept.

Dreams fulfilled!

The Philippine Federation of Pre-need Plan companies, Inc. (PFPPCI) is celebrating the 6th Pre-need Consciousness Week on February 5-8, 2007 with a theme "Pre-Need: Fulfilling Dreams."

Pre-need, during the past 40 years, has been an icon of habitual savings among Filipinos. It has been a partner of every family in achieving their dream education, dream pension, and even worry-free service when the inevitable happens.

With the hundreds of thousands of Planholders attesting to the viability of pre-need as an ultimate partner in financial preparation, pre-need places itself in the hearts of many Filipinos as something they can't live without in facing a brighter future.

The following are what the planholders have to say about pre-need's role in fulfilling their dreams:

1. "The education plan saved us from headache, worry and loan sharks every enrollment time. We had peace of mind. It's been worth it".- ***Proud dad of Joan Narciso, Summa Cum Laude graduate of UPLB***

2. "Getting a plan was something that sets my family's security. When I won a house and lot in the promo, I felt all the more secure. All you need for your dreams to come true are two things: trust and belief" - Adel Ramirez, Planholder since 1998

3. "We all know that every family comes across difficult times mostly in terms of material support, given that the country's economy goes through unpredictable ups and downs. My own family went through times like these. Fortunately, my education was the one thing that was never at risk, simply because my parents were prudent enough to plan ahead, and to ensure that they chose the right partners to entrust their child's future to". - ***Pre-Need Scholar***

4. "When asked what he did with his Pension he just claimed in full, he said he gave some to his children and saved some for his planned trip abroad. Quite a respite from the sacrifices he did to make sure that his family will have comforts in life".- Aurelio C. Rivera, Planholder

5. "My educational plan served as an added motivation for me to study harder, since not everybody is given the chance to enter college, primarily because of financial problems. It also served as a reminder for me of the promise I made which is to show my parents that I am worthy of this educational plan, and that I value this privilege they gave me. Financially, my educational plan was of great help, especially during the times when my parent's income was below average due to the sales of our business. The burden of my parents to send us, their children to college was lessened. All they had to worry was my allowance, since my tuition was already covered by the plan. There were also times wherein the money sent to me was used for other important matters. With the help of the educational plan, I am sure that my parents did not have so much problems regarding my college education".- ***Geraldine C. Mamotos, Pre-Need Scholar***

6. "It's not only that we get big money from education plans, we also get it early that is why my parents have no problem searching it. I am always enrolling early and I also always buy all my school supplies. My parents need not worry about my allowance because it is also available. In addition, this money also helps my sisters, who are also studying. Furthermore, we can temporarily use the money when money problems arise". - ***Xyris Millo, Pre-Need Scholar***

7. "I would venture to say that the educational plan had contributed so much in giving them the sense of security and stability about their financial needs, which in turn enables them to concentrate and focus on their studies". - ***Frank M. Banaynal-Pre-Need Planholder***

9. "All throughout my college schooling, the education plan was always there to assist me financially through the reimbursement of my tuition. The savings that the family earned was really a big help in our daily expenditures. I am glad that my parents made the right choice in choosing my education plan" - ***Carlo A. Carreon, Planholder***

10. "My eldest son, Mark showed great potential with his studies and extracurricular activities in high school. With the help of the educational plan, I was able to enroll him at De La Salle University, known for their excellent education in computer sciences. With his enthusiasm and diligence in his studies, he graduated Magna Cum Laude of Computer Science major in Computer Engineering. As a needed benefit, I was able to receive 75 percent of the total amount I paid in return for my son's achievement in school. Furthermore, being able to graduate with honors in a prestigious university gave my son several opportunities for employment. He was able to work at Accenture for two years and presently employed with Fujitsu in Singapore". - ***Judith T. Ty, Planholder, Education Plan***

8. "I will never forget the early morning of Aug. 4, 2000 when my husband passed away after a quadruple heart bypass surgery. My husband had an angioplasty in April of the same year and it was a big surprise for us to learn that he needed bypass operation. We were expecting positive results as the bypass was completed but while in the recovery room in the early hours of that fateful day, he quietly left us unprepared for his untimely death. I was so stunned and did not know what to do until representatives of my pre-need provider arrived and made arrangements to bring my husband's remains out of the hospital and to the funeral parlor. All told, the loss of a loved one is very draining, very sad and very difficult. Had I not prepared and purchased a memorial plan, these financial worries would have been worse. As I invested in and purchased memorial plans which have been fully paid before my husband's sickness, I was even able to sell them at my hour of need and which I used to pay our hospital bills. My foresight certainly paid off as I was able to cash in my investments and even profited from the same and was able to use it to ease my financial worries. The memorial plan which I used for my husband was pur-

DREAMS/ G7

> 'When asked what he did with his Pension he just claimed in full, he said he gave some to his children and saved some for his planned trip abroad. Quite a respite from the sacrifices he did to make sure that his family will have comforts in life'.
>
> *Aurelio C. Rivera, Planholder*

PHILAM PLANS: COMMITTED TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Serving the Filipino and his family

Philam Plans Inc. stands fast in its commitment to help every Filipino achieve his dreams. With the distinct honor of being among the country's leading financial services institutions, Philam Plans takes every opportunity to give back to the Filipino community at large by helping each and every one of us fulfill our hopes of having an assured tomorrow.

In securing our future, we need to understand that saving plays a big role. However, not many of us are into the habit of saving. Philam Plans, the country's leading provider of savings products through its various education, pension, and life / memorial programs provides useful and basic tips which will help saving much easier.

Follow this simple guide. You're sure to be on your way to saving up for your future today!

Check it out.

1. **Be realistic in setting your goals.**
   If you're specific with your short and long-term goals in life, you'll know exactly why and how much you need to save. This should help you properly level and manage your savings expectations.

2. **Create a monthly budget and make sure you stick to it.**
   To ensure that you do not spend unnecessarily, make a monthly budget. Identify all possible expenses and allocate a corresponding amount for each. Make sure, however, that you stick to your budget plan.

3. **Leave your credit card at home.**
   For many of us, credit cards eat up at least 25% of our monthly salary. And more often than not, when you review your card bill, you will find out that most of your transactions were unnecessary expenses resulting from impulsive shopping. So leave your credit card at home and bring it with you only when you are to purchase an important item, as planned.

4. **Always make a shopping list.**
   Before heading to the grocery store, make sure you have a shopping list with you. Stick to this list. This safeguards you from buying nice-to-haves.

5. **Buy in Bulk.**
   Share this needs with your mom, sister or friends and buy them in bulk. Prices are much cheaper in warehouse clubs, discount stores and big grocery stores. Buying in bulk will definitely cut cost.

6. **Walk to health.**
   The cost of gasoline is undeniably high. Try walking down the streets instead of bringing the car to run your errands. Aside from saving gas, it improves your health too.

7. **Curb your spending.**
   Avoid splurging on your luxuries. For instance, expensive coffee indulgence may be good comforters of the soul. However, set your limits. Take its price into consideration. Think about it several times. Is it really necessary?

8. **Start young.**
   The first few years of employment are usually the best stage to start saving. It is at this stage that the bigger part of your salary usually go to your wants and not your needs. Think carefully. Examine your expenses and put up savings instead of giving in to impulsive purchases.

9. **Think positive.**
   Believe in the idea that saving will take you somewhere. Your hard work will materialize to nothing if you end up not having anything in times of need.

10. **Pay yourself first at payday.**
    After getting your payslip at the end of the month, set aside an amount as personal savings. Take this as a reward for having worked hard the entire month. Set aside this amount in a safe savings mechanism - one which is free from your own spending temptations.

Safe saving mechanisms are best provided by Philam Plans. Over the years, it has grown its product lines beyond the conventional pre-need packages in order to address specific financial needs and provide savings solutions for every Filipino. Its pension products boast of flexibility and variety with its numerous pay and maturity programs and cash benefits which you can use for leisure, making major purchases or retirement. Its responsive education products offer a semestral benefit payout to help you in your child's tuition fee obligations. It also provides a graduation gift which your child could either use to sustain his daily needs while looking for a job or as capital for his business. Its life products, on the other hand, take pride of its sevicing and convenience features through its Family Assistance Office which assists the planholder's family at the critical time of need. Its call service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (02) 400-4180 to 81.

Start saving for your future today. Philam Plans is here to guide you in securing your tomorrow.

Talk to us now and let us help you achieve your dreams. Call the Philam Plans Call Center today at (02) 528-5200.

Philam Plans reaches out to Filipinos

Philam Plans Inc., bearer of the prestige of being the leader in the pre-need market today, gives back to the Filipinos the opportunity of achieving dreams and satisfying needs by keeping its promise to help the needy, most especially those who were victims of unfortunate natural phenomena, through its continued practice of worthwhile corporate social responsibility.

Over 30 Philam Plans employee-volunteers actively supported the Company's annual "Give Joy, Share-A-Toy" event at the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) in Manila where they toured the city's largest public hospital while giving away presents and warm hugs to the underprivileged children confined at the PGH. Now on its ninth year, the project was led by Philam Plans President and CEO Jack Howell, together with former Philam Plans President and CEO Jesus Hofileña, FLMI, who is presently Philamlife EVP for Sales, Marketing and Agency Training.

Meanwhile, in response to the vast damage caused by tropical storm "Reming" to the people of Legaspi City and its environs in the Bicol Region, Philam Plans and its employees instituted a disaster relief program to extend assistance to the community. Philam Plans raised from its employees numerous donations in the form of cash, clothing, blankets, food and other commodities.

Above left: Philam Plans President and CEO Jack I. Howell shares a smile with a young patient at the Philippine General Hospital during the "Give Joy, Share-A-Toy" event.
Bottom left: Ms. Jenny Howell chats with the mother of another ailing child.
Above right: Mr. Howell and Philam Plans VP for Sales - Luzon and Metro Manila Rico T.Bautista share a light moment with children of Legazpi City residents affected by the storm.
Bottom right: Ms. Jenny Howell spends time with another group of children from Legazpi.

Philam Plans, Inc. is the country's leading provider of savings products that build funds for the secured future of Filipino families through its various education, retirement and life / memorial services. Today, Philam Plans continues to dominate the field, maintaining its stature as a leader in the industry. It is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Philamlife, the country's leading life insurance company, and backed by the financial might and expertise of American International Group (AIG), the leading international insurance organization with operations in more than 130 countries and jurisdictions.

OPENING CEREMONY AND PLANHOLDER'S DAY
February 5, 2007, Activity Center, Market-Market Mall

12:00 PM Registration
12:15 PM Thanksgiving Mass
12:45 PM National Anthem
PM Welcome Remarks
Ms. Jesusa Puyat-Concepcion - PFPPCI Treasurer and Loyola Plans Chairman & President,
01:00 PM "Fulfilling Dreams"
Mr. Antonio Meloto - Executive Director, Gawad Kalinga
Plaque of Appreciation Awarding - PFPPCI President Atty. Juan Miguel Vazquez and PFPPCI Treasurer, Mrs. Jesusa Puyat-Concepcion
01:45 PM Overview of the Industry
Acknowledgement of Guests
Ms. Gina dela Vega-Cruz and Mr. Michael C. Aquino

02:00 PM Audio-Visual Presentation
02:15 PM Raffle
02:30 PM Dance Number
02:45 PM Backgrounder of the Pre-Need Week Celebration
Mr. Christopher Puyat-Concepcion - Director and Vice President, Loyola Plans
03:00 PM Inspirational Message
Atty. Juan Miguel M. Vazquez - President, PFPPCI
03:15 PM Donation to GMA Kapuso Foundation
03:30 PM Song Number
Ms. Ai Ai de las Alas

03:45 PM Toast to Success
PFPPCI Directors, Officers and Members on stage
04:00 PM Raffle
Serving of Snacks

HOSTS: Mr. Michael C. Aquino - Manager, Training & Marketing Support, Loyola Plans
Ms. Regina dela Vega-Cruz - Vice President, Berkley International Plans/Family First

6TH PRE-NEED CONSCIOUSNESS WEEK 2007

February 1, 2006 (THURSDAY)	**February 5, 2006 (MONDAY)**	**February 8, 2006 (THURSDAY)**	**February 9, 2006 (FRIDAY)**
Luncheon with SEC Press Corps 11 - 2 PM Edsa Shangri-La HEAT Plaque of Appreciation Buffet Lunch 15 PFPPCI Directors & Officers 8 SEC Press Corps	Opening Day - Planholder's Day 12 - 5 PM Market-Market Activity Center 500 attendees PFPPCI officers Member companies Planholders Agents activities Thanksgiving mass Dance number Raffle speaker MR. ANTONIO MELOTO hosts Mr. Michael Aquino Ms. Ma. Regina Dela Vega-Cruz Guest Celebrity Ai Ai de las Alas Donation to: GMA Kapuso Foundation Typhoon Reming Victims	Pre-Need Forum and Pre-Need Unitas Awarding 1 - 5 PM Dusit Hotel Nikko Ballroom A 200 attendees Classroom type attendees PFPPCI officers Agents Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Unitas Awardee speakers: PAUL JOSEPH GARCIA - ING COMMISSIONER JUANITA CUETO ATTY. MIGUEL VAZQUEZ hosts: Ms. Ofelia Jacinto Mr. Alex Flores	Golf Tournament Philippine Navy Golf Club In coordination with Mr. Jose Gonzales

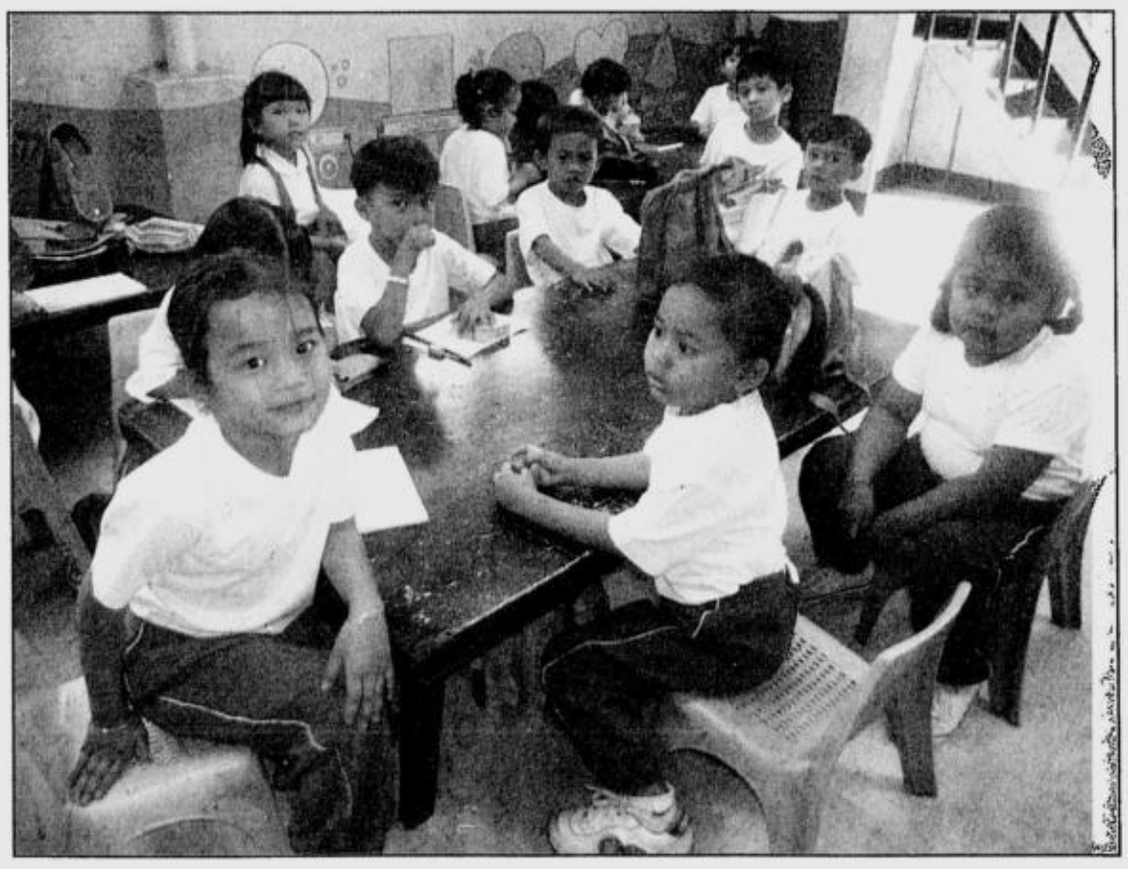
PRE-NEED
February 8

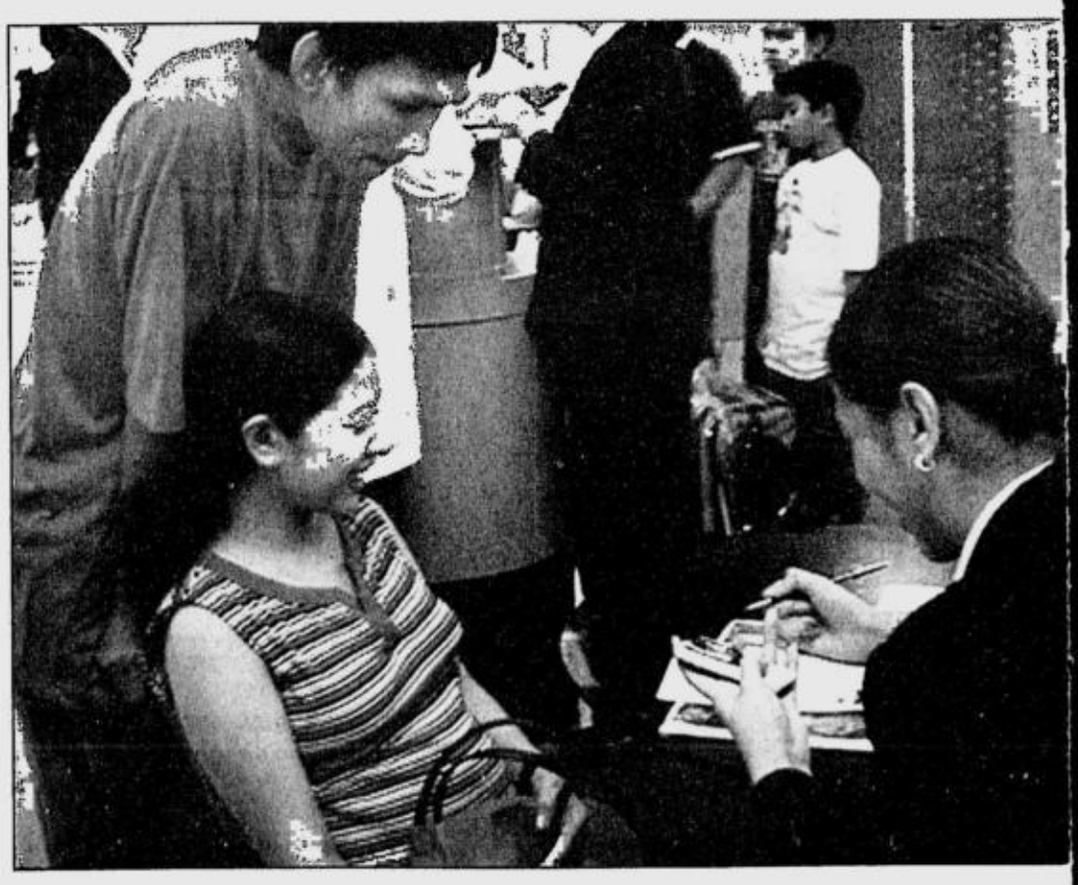
TIME		EVENT
01:00	PM	Registration
02:00	PM	Opening Ceremo
		Invocation
		Ms. Maribel A.
		National Anthen
02:10	PM	Acknowledgmen
02:15	PM	Welcome Remar
		Mr. Caesar T. Mi
02:25	PM	SESSION 1
		Introduction of S
		Mr. Jose Alberto
President		
		"Financial Mark
		Paul Joseph M.
		Plaque of Appre
03:00	PM	Interaction
03:15	PM	SESSION 2
		Introduction of S
		Mr. Emilio S. de
		"Growth-Center
		Commissioner M
		Plaque of Appre
03:45	PM	Interaction
04:00	PM	Coffee Break / A
04:15	PM	SESSION 3
		Introduction of S
		Mr. Dominador
President		
		"Why the Pre-N
		Plaque of Appre
04:30	PM	Interaction
04:45	PM	UNITAS OVER
		Mr. Rene P. Roy
		To be awarded b
		Loyola Plans Chairman
05:00	PM	Closing Remark
		Mrs. Jesusa Puy
05:30	PM	Turn-Over Cere

HOSTS: Ms. Ofelia Jacin
Mr. Alex Flores

ATTIRE: Formal / Busines

OUR WORD. OUR COMMITMENT. OUR PLEDGE.





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FORUM AND UNITAS AWARDING
, 2007, Dusit Hotel Nikko, Makati

ny
Obidos – PFPPCI Auditor, and Pacific Plans Executive Vice President
t of Guests
ks
chelena - President, Cocoplans

peaker
T. Alba – PFPPCI Vice President – Education Plan and Prudentialife Plans

t Outlook for the Pre-Need Industry in 2007"
Garcia, Chief Investment Officer, ING Bank- Investment Management
iation Awarding

peaker
Quiros, Jr. – PFPPCI Vice President – Pension Plan and Ayala Plans President
d Regulation: Sustaining Industry Development and Strength"
la. Juanita E. Cueto, Securities and Exchange Commission
iation Awarding

udio-Visual Presentation

peaker
P. Reyes – PFPPCI Vice President – Life Plan and Paz Memorial Service Vice

ed is fulfilling Dreams" Atty. Juan Miguel M. Vazquez, President, PFPPCI
iation Awarding

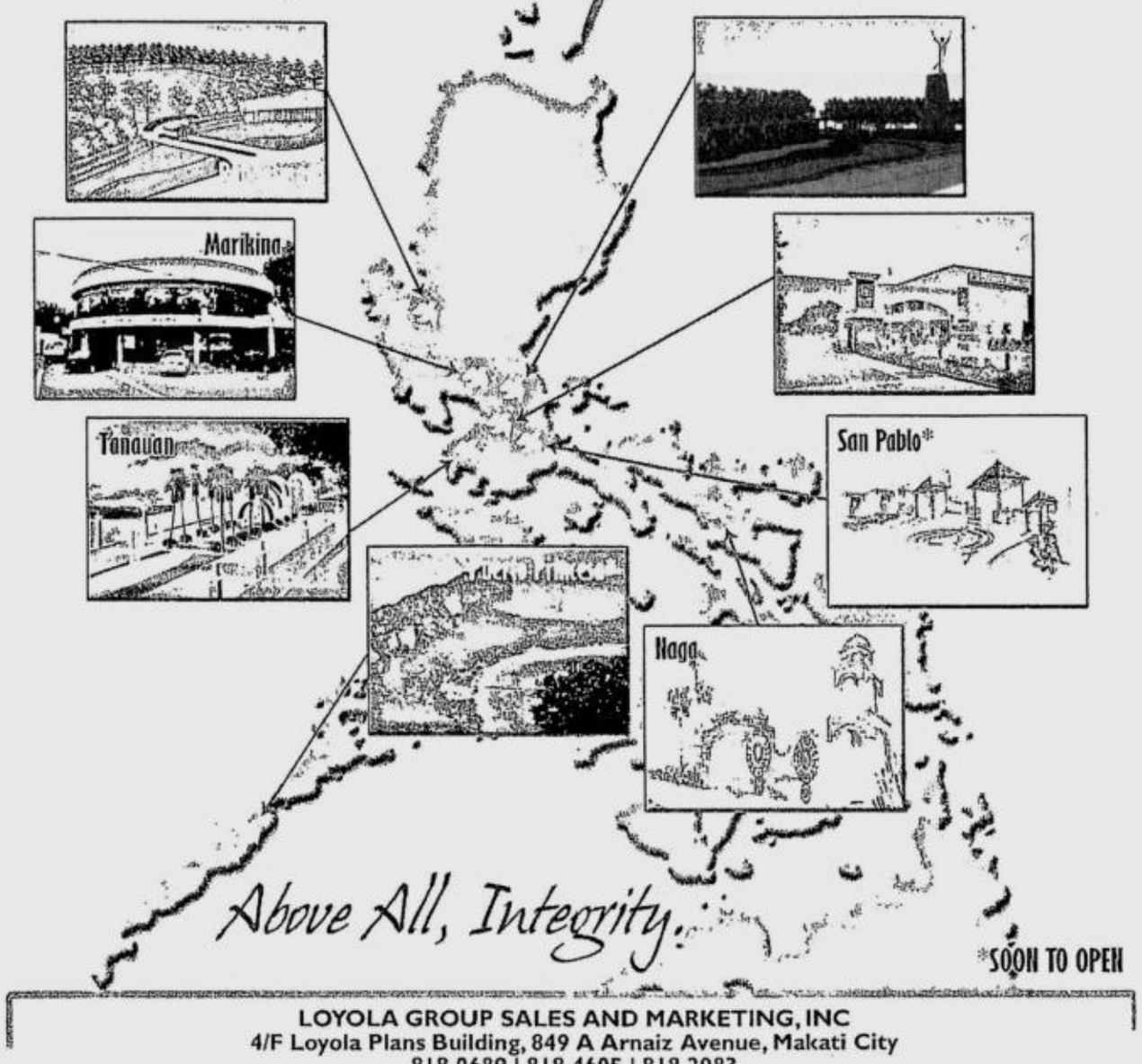
VIEW AND AWARDING
– PFPPCI Director – Life Plan and Trusteeship Plans President
PFPPCI President, Atty. Juan Miguel M. Vazquez and
& President, Mrs. Jesusa Puyat-Concepcion

t-Concepcion – PFPPCI Treasurer and Loyola Plans Chairman and President
ıony

o – Executive Sales Director, NCR Cluster, Loyola Plans
- Assistant Vice President - Alabang, Cocoplans

s

Loyola
MEMORIAL PARKS AND GARDENS



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541.7988 | 826.4833

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FLD Building, A Mabini Street
Tanauan City, Batangas
(043)778.0925 | (043)778.6395

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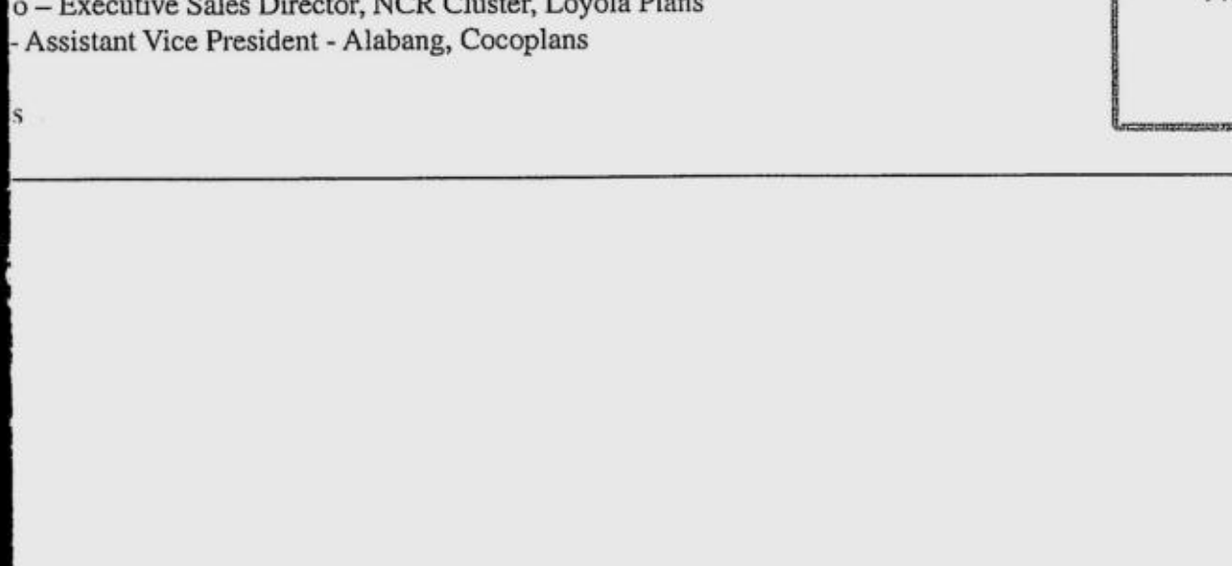
(054)473.9574



Strength
YOU CAN COUNT ON

We are your partners in securing the bright future you have always dreamed of. Our strength lies in your unfailing trust.

We are celebrating our 9th year and we share this milestone with you... Because **YOU count and YOU matter.**

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Board of Directors and Officers

Pre-need fulfills dreams not only of every Filipino, but also of a nation. This is a direction that the industry has been taking

Celebrate life, always...

TO CELEBRATE a life lived... to be grateful for the time spent together... to rejoice in all the good that has come from that life. Isn't that how we want to celebrate the life of a loved one who has gone ahead? Not in complete and utter grief, but in joyful remembrance and appreciative recollection.

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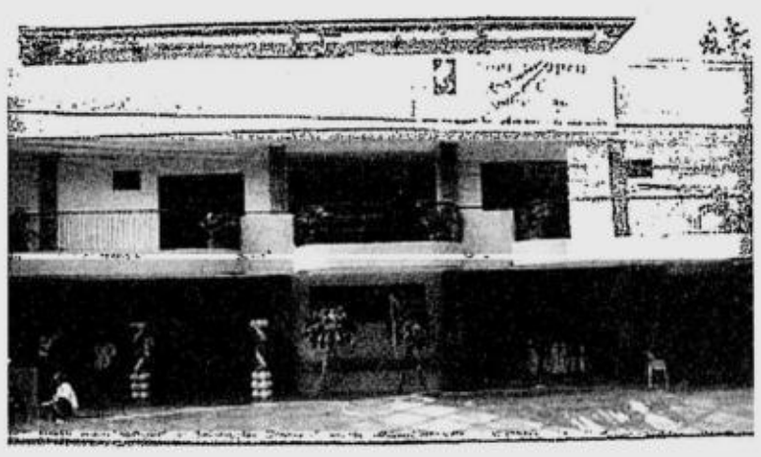

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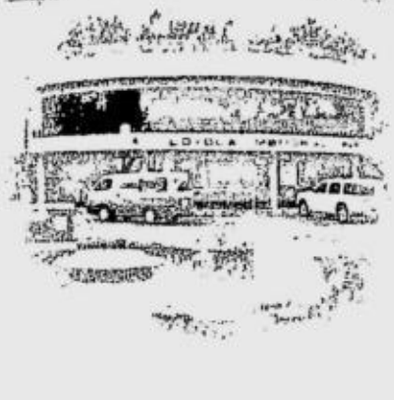

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Offers a complete line of Memorialization and Cremation Services

Loyola Memorial Chapels-Cubao - Loyola Memorial Park, Chapels, Crematory Services Inc. (LMPCCSI) recently inaugurated its fourth Metro Manila based memorial chapel located at 135 20th Avenue, Cubao, Quezon City. Shown in the picture (from left) Antonio T. Puyat Jr., LMPCCSI president, jocelyn Sacramento LMPCCSI vice president for operations, Fr. Cesar Tolentino presiding priest and Jesusa Puyat-Concepcion, chair and president of Loyola Plans Consolidated Inc.

Dreams fulfilled!

From page G3

chased many years ago and would have cost me so much had it been bought at need. After my husband's funeral, when his passing away was starting to sink in, I received a check representing the *balik-bayad* feature of my pre need memorial plan". - ***Adoracion M. Castro, Planholder***

9. "As a believer of Pre-Need plans I speak for myself and in behalf of my clients who's lives have been changed often experiencing the benefits of their investments. Last year, the 29th of April, my father went home with the Lord. Serving other clients with their memorial needs had seemed an easy task to perform but lo and behold! It wasn't easy when it was my turn to do the service for my own family. Being a believer of our product and the benefits of a pre-need memorial plan purchased 20 years ago, we knew we made the right decision in buying the plan. The memorial plan took care of addressing every concern and needs the family had. Mortuary preparation was efficient and immediate. Announcements taken care of, flowers supervised beautifully, comfort and cleanliness taken well into consideration and death certificate and transfers all came to place with no hassles or worry. It was just what the family needed, a good and competent service plan fulfilled with utmost professionalism".- ***Brenda E. Torres, Planholder***

10. "Continuously trusting and believing in the commitment of the Pre-Need Company, I joined them last 2002 after my 16-year stint with a bank. Seeing that the company had untainted reputation with regards to claims, I myself tried hard to diligently pay my dues. Now, it has come to reality. I am presently enjoying the benefits of the educational plan of my eldest daughter. Despite the high cost of education, we can still have our daughter enrolled in a big reputable school. Given this. I never hesitated in getting another for my twin daughters. In addition, the Memorial Plan I had benefited a very close family member in his untimely demise. Moving forward, the pension plan I got for the family will soon be fully paid and will eventually mature in the next few years. Right now I am happy with the experience I have which I will continuously share with family, friends and clients. Having said this, I would like to thank the pre-need companies for giving the average consumer the opportunity to prepare for their future by only putting in a minimum amount of their hard earned money. The pre-need companies' dedication to their clients will surely build a strong and lasting relationship. I hope that they will introduce and develop more products that will be beneficial to everyone. *Mabuhay*! " - ***Bethsaida Laya-Mandia, Unit Manager/Planholder***

11. If I put my money in the bank, in a regular savings account, it does not really earn very much interest and it is very easy to withdraw. Once the money is in my hands, it is very easy to spend. That is why I decided to invest in a pension plan with insurance. Now I have savings for my golden years and I will be able to leave my family a secure future. I believe this is money well spent and well saved. - ***Erlinda Salazar***

12. Ten years has passed since we invested in a Pension Plan for security and insurance during retirement. On Aug. 5, 2005, Senator Raul S. Roco had moved on to "life after life."

After a few months, I got a call from the pension company asking for an appointment. Its president, accompanied by some key officers, came over to deliver the death benefit check of Raul Roco. The quick response and thoughtful gesture was a source of comfort and consolation to me and our family.

Again, without my having to remind them about our plans' maturity dates, they called me to say they would deliver the lump sum checks for both our plans. And again, I was touched by the caring attention and prompt service the company had shown, true to their commitment of forever caring for their planholders.

All I can really say is "Thank you, for the caring and responsive service" the company has extended to us. For all planholders, let me assure you, that like us, being serviced by this company means stability, security and success. I have no regrets, only praise and thanks.- *Sonia M. Roco.*

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LOYOLA @38
Performance and Leadership through Partnership

The gift of love — life plan
The gift of mind — education plan
The gift of time — time plan

PRE-NEED WEEK CHAMPION 2007

6th Pre-need Consciousness Week 2007
Pre-need: Fulfilling Dreams

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Congratulations to the Philippine Federation of Pre-Need Plan Companies, Inc. for the successful celebration of the 6th Pre-Need Consciousness Week!

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DeathCare Experts
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CATBALOGAN, SAMAR San Bartolome St., cor. Taft Avenue, Catbalogan, Samar
CEBU CITY P. Burgos St., Cebu City (032) 2536174
DAAN BANTAYAN, CEBU Agujo Poblacion, Daan Bantayan, Cebu (032) 4375736
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DUMAGUETE CITY Brgy Bantiad, Bacong, Negros Oriental (035) 4200101/(035)2262617
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JAGNA, BOHOL Cantagay, Jagna, Bohol (038) 2383075
KALIBO, AKLAN ★ Barrio, Estancia, Kalibo, Aklan
KABANKALAN CITY Rizal Extension Brgy. 9, Kabankalan, Negros Occidental (034) 4713612
MAASIN, SOUTHERN LEYTE Brgy. Maria Clara, Maasin City, Southern Leyte (053)3814561
MOALBOAL, CEBU Barrio Tunga, Moalboal, Cebu (032) 4748408
NAVAL, BILIRAN Brgy. Calumpang, Naval, Biliran, Leyte
ORMOC CITY National Highway, Brgy. San Pablo, Ormoc City (053) 5614901 / 2556705
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SAN JOSE, ANTIQUE Brgy. Atabay, San Jose, Antique (0920) 7126052
SIATON, NEGROS ORIENTAL Siaton, Negros Oriental (035) 4270182
SOGOD, SOUTHERN LEYTE National Highway, Brgy. Casao, Bontoc, Southern Leyte (053) 3823166
TACLOBAN CITY No. 8 Diversion Road, Fatima Village, Tacloban City (053) 5236908
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Mindanao Chapels:

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BUTUAN CITY Ochoa Ave., Brgy. 14, Limaha, Butuan City (085) 3424898
CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY Zone 1-A, Iponan Hi-way, Cagayan de Oro City (088)3509250
DAVAO CITY - CALINAN ★ National Highway, Brgy. Roque, Riverside Calinan, Davao City
DAVAO CITY - PANACAN ★ Km 14, National Highway, Brgy. Panacan, Davao City
DAVAO CITY - TORIL ★ Barrio Lizada, Toril, Davao City
DIGOS, DAVAO DEL SUR Barrio Balutakay, Digos, Davao del Sur
DIPOLOG CITY ★ Malvar St., Dipolog City (0917) 7001482
GEN. SANTOS CITY Brgy. Apopong, Gen. Santos City (0919) 5059966
GINGOOG CITY Brgy. 20, Cabuyoan, Gingoog City (088) 8613007
ILIGAN CITY Juan Luna Sabayle Sts., Iligan City (063) 2232429 / 2232430
ISULAN CITY Isulan, South Cotabato (064) 2013282
KIDAPAWAN CITY Lanao, Kidapawan City, North Cotabato (0916) 3476626
MALAYBALAY, BUKIDNON Fortich St., Malaybalay, Bukidnon
MANOLO FORTICH, BUKIDNON Manolo Fortich, Bukidnon
MATI, DAVAO ORIENTAL National Super Highway, Brgy. Dahican, Mati, Davao Oriental (087) 8113355
MIDSAYAP, NORTH COTOBATO Purok 3, Villarica Midsayap, North Cotobato (064) 2299146
PAGADIAN CITY Purok Garcia Sto. Niño District, Pagadian City (062) 2141861
PANABO CITY, DAVAO DEL NORTE Brgy. San Francisco, Panabo City, Davao del Norte Brgy. Salvacion, Panabo City, Davao del Norte
SAN FRANCISCO, AGUSAN DEL SUR ★ Bo. Hubang, San Francisco, Agusan del Sur
TACURONG Tacurong, Sultan Kudarat
TAGUM CITY, DAVAO DEL NORTE Purok Santol, La Filipina, Tagum City (084) 4004635
TANDAG, SURIGAO DEL SUR National Highway, Brgy. Rosario, Tandag, Surigao Del Sur (086) 2114438
VALENCIA, BUKIDNON Sayre St., National Highway, Valencia, Bukidnon
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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

BPI Leasing: The wiser option

"LEASING PROVIDES AN EXCELLENT FUNDing alternative to the high cost of acquiring and maintaining depreciating assets, such as a fleet of company vehicles."

Thus said BPI Leasing vice president Danilo T. Reyes, who was the guest speaker during the recent Pharmaceutical Executives of the Philippines (PEP) membership meeting at the Manila Polo Club, Makati City. In his speech, Reyes talked about the advantages of leasing, and how companies can easily acquire machineries and equipment through leasing, more specifically with the acknowledged industry leader, BPI Leasing Corp.

Reyes added: "Having the capability to easily acquire or upgrade capital assets can be a huge advantage, especially when you are operating under a highly competitive environment. Leasing can give you that edge."

Leasing, Reyes explained, is a method of paying for the use of an asset over a specified period. In contrast to outright cash purchase or borrowing, leasing requires a much lower initial cash outlay which enables the company to conserve its capital and credit lines for the more critical needs. Leasing generally requires a minimal up-front deposit of only 10 to 20 percent of the cost of the asset.

In the Philippines, one name stands out for its experience, expertise and leadership in the field of asset financing-BPI Leasing Corp.

Established in 1970, BPI Leasing is the 100-percent owned equipment leasing arm of the Bank of the Philippine Islands. Close to half of the multinational companies in the Philippines' Top 1000 corporations lease from BPI Leasing-the industry leader with a market share of about 30 percent.

Why is BPI Leasing the wiser option? "Because BPI Leasing can give you the best leasing deals that can turn out to be practical business solutions," Reyes answered. For starters, BPI Leasing offers the most competitive rates and flexible payment terms. "Our lower rates give you substantial savings especially on large-ticket leases, and no lease transaction is too large for us because we are one of the largest capitalized leasing companies. And our flexible payment terms allow you to manage your cash flows better," he added.

Aside from being the leader, BPI Leasing is also noted for its market innovations. It allows customers to view their account status and pay rentals on-line or through auto-debit arrangements.

BPI Leasing's products are fully compliant with current accounting standards, which let the company offer both finance lease and operating lease to customers. Customers who need off-books operating leases that are VAT-able can be accommodated by BPI Rental Corp, the wholly owned subsidiary of BPI Leasing.

LEASING Industry leader BPI Leasing Corp presented a discussion on 'Leasing-A Better Alternative' to members of the Pharmaceutical Executives of the Philippines (PEP) during the association's general membership meeting at the Manila Polo Club on Oct. 19, 2006. The discussion also included the tax advantages of leasing and international accounting standards on leases. Shown are, from left, Virgilio Pocholo P. De La Cruz, CFO of Zuellig Pharma Corp and past president of PEP, Danilo T. Reyes, vice president of BPI Leasing Corp, lawyer Cresencio T. Meneses I, senior manager of the tax services department of Isla Lipana & Co, Ric M. Danao, Assurance Partner of Isla Lipana & Co, Sir Francis Kong Perez, PEP president and finance manager of Boehringer Ingelheim (Philippines) Inc, Marie Jannette Jakosalem, VP for finance of Metro Drug Inc and Eduardo D. Jose Jr, director of BPI Leasing and senior vice president of Bank of the Philippine Islands.

Aside from passenger cars and commercial vehicles, other leasable assets include printing and other industrial equipment, office machines, medical and hospital equipment, heavy equipment, kitchen and commissary equipment, telecommunication facilities and even buildings and warehouses.

For more information, call a BPI Leasing account officer at 845-5630, 816-9261, or 816-9124.

GLOBE CITED IN 4TH 'BEST ANNUAL REPORT' AWARDS

Globe Telecom was one of the finalists in the Management Association of the Philippines' (MAP) 4th 'Best Annual Report' Awards held last month. MAP, the leading management organization in the country, recognizes corporations that practice good governance by adhering to the rules of transparency, accountability and fairness, and are compliant with international standards of financial reporting. Also among the finalists are Ayala Land Inc and Manila Water Company Inc, which was awarded the 2nd runner-up for the 'Best Annual Report'. The MAP also gave a special award to the Ayala Group as three of the conglomerate's companies made it to the top 15 finalists. Shown are (from left) Philippine Stock Exchange president Francis Lim, Securities and Exchange Commission Chair Fe Barin, Globe treasury head Albert De Larrazabal and MAP president Evelyn Singson.

MSD launches advocacy against cervical cancer

IT WAS ONCE SAID THAT, "GOD could not be everywhere and therefore He made mothers." Though we know that to be theologically incorrect, mothers are undoubtedly heaven-sent. God designed mothers to care and safeguard the health and well-being of her child. While a child is young and helpless, the mother is always there to protect and to guide. But as the child grows older and learns to be independent, a mother can only wait on the sidelines and hope all those years of nurturing and nourishing pays off. But the truth is: mothers can only do so much. Although mothers cannot protect their children from everything "bad" in the world, there is one thing they can help protect their young daughters from, and that is preventing them from acquiring diseases, including cervical cancer.

With the launching of the "Moms on Guard" and "Be on Guard" campaigns, pharmaceutical company Merck Sharp & Dohme (MSD) Philippines hopes to help protect mothers and women from having cervical cancer. Cervical cancer was found to be the second leading cause of cancer death in women in 2004, based on the 2005 Philippine Cancer Facts and Estimates published by the Philippine Cancer Society Inc. In 2005, cervical cancer had 7,277 new cases and was responsible for 3,807 deaths. It is estimated that 10 Filipino women die each day due to cervical cancer.

Guarding oneself against cervical cancer is the best defense in preventing this dreaded disease. Many women (including mothers) are unaware that cervical cancer is predominantly caused by certain types of a virus called Human Papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a common virus that affects both females and males. There are more than 100 types of HPV that can affect different areas of the body. Although many types of Human Papillomavirus (HPV) are relatively harmless, there are certain strains of HPVs that have been linked to cervical cancer and abnormal cervical cells, while other types can cause wart-like growths on the genitals. With the recent advancements in medicine, protection against certain types of HPVs (HPV types 6, 11, 16, and 18) is now made possible through the first and only quadrivalent vaccine developed to prevent cervical cancer; vulvar and vaginal cancers; pre-cancerous lesions; and genital warts.

Since studies have also shown that HPV infection is more common in women in the younger age groups, particularly those in their late teens and twenties, mothers can help protect their young daughters against possible HPV infection in the future.

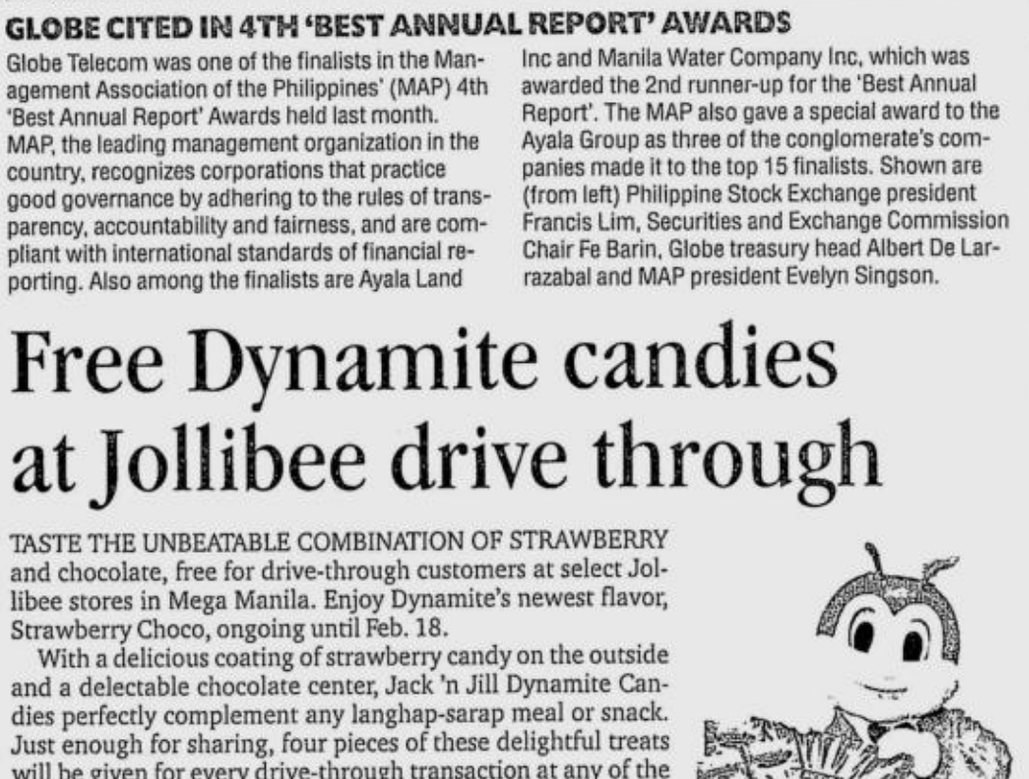
Cervical cancer is life-threatening, but mothers and women have the power to reduce the risk of getting it. To find out more about guarding against cervical cancer, consult your Ob-Gynecologist or your daughter's pediatrician. You can also call hotline numbers 878-6338 or 1-800-1-888-6737, or log on to www.msdbeonguard.com.

Free Dynamite candies at Jollibee drive through

TASTE THE UNBEATABLE COMBINATION OF STRAWBERRY and chocolate, free for drive-through customers at select Jollibee stores in Mega Manila. Enjoy Dynamite's newest flavor, Strawberry Choco, ongoing until Feb. 18.

With a delicious coating of strawberry candy on the outside and a delectable chocolate center, Jack 'n Jill Dynamite Candies perfectly complement any langhap-sarap meal or snack. Just enough for sharing, four pieces of these delightful treats will be given for every drive-through transaction at any of the 14 chosen Jollibee stores in Mega Manila.

The intense combination of contrasting textures and matching flavors makes eating Dynamite Candy an "explosive" experience. So drive through now at Jollibee to get a free taste of the new Dynamite Strawberry Choco candy!



MDH BREAKS GROUND WITH NEW PAIN AND WELLNESS CENTER

Manila Doctors Hospital, in line with its 50th anniversary celebration, recently opened its Pain and Wellness Center, a first of its kind in the Philippines with integrated and comprehensive approaches to managing pain under one roof. As a one-stop-shop pain clinic, its main thrust is to help address all forms of pain-chronic, acute and cancer. Designed as a multidisciplinary array of diagnostic and treatment facility, the MDH Pain and Wellness Center is managed not only by pain doctors who are anesthesiologists, but also other pain medicine doctors such as neurologists, oncologists, orthopedists, physiatrists and psychiatrists: as well as non-physician specialists including nurses, physician assistants, physical or rehabilitation therapists and psychologists-all working together to evaluate, manage and treat patients' conditions. Through the combined expertise of a multidisciplinary team of pain specialists, the Center offers the most advanced treatment choices presently available in a supportive, compassionate environment. Gracing the occasion were, from left, Deedee Sytangco, media personality, Dr. Ma. Lourdes Josefina Koh Cabaluna, section chief, MDH Pain and Wellness Center, Peggy Cham, president, Joy in Living Foundation, and Suzette Andrews, publisher, Big C Magazine.

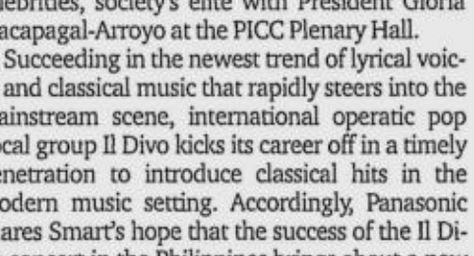
Panasonic partners with Smart in Il Divo concert

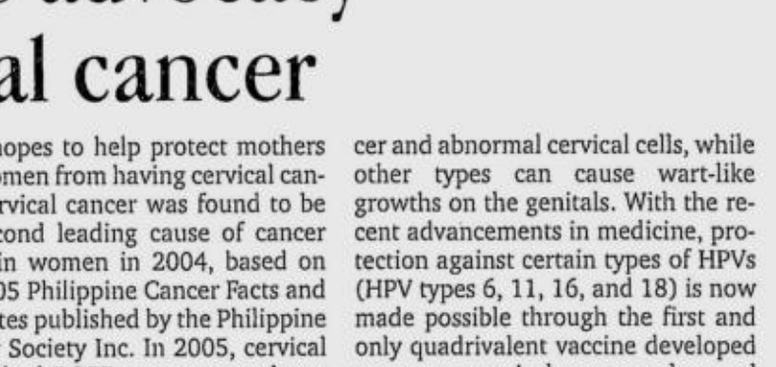
PANASONIC RECENTLY PARTNERED WITH Smart Infinity in a one-of-a-kind magical and musical experience with the world-renowned quartet Il Divo, as it serenaded to its most melodic highs in a jampacked audience of famous celebrities, society's elite with President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo at the PICC Plenary Hall.

Succeeding in the newest trend of lyrical voices and classical music that rapidly steers into the mainstream scene, international operatic pop vocal group Il Divo kicks its career off in a timely penetration to introduce classical hits in the modern music setting. Accordingly, Panasonic shares Smart's hope that the success of the Il Divo concert in the Philippines brings about a new perspective to the audience on the importance of breaking traditional barriers by presenting a cutting-edge novel quality in the contemporary age.

World-class music icons like Il Divo represent musical quality that sets to make a difference among run-of-the-mill artists in the music panorama. Likewise, Panasonic furthers its goal in pioneering quality entertainment equipment in the country by continuously bringing the complete line of state-of-the-art audio-visual product technology that stimulates the public's preference for perfection.

"Il Divo, Live in Manila" also set forth the quartet's latest album "Siempre", which was made available in November 2006 and has already achieved platinum and double platinum sales in Spain, the United Kingdom and Australia. Il Divo's successful visit in the country joins up on the group's recently completed world tour, sweeping the feet off of more than 500,000 adoring fans in 69 cities across the United Kingdom, United States, Europe and Australia.





SIEMENS IT OUTSOURCING BUSINESS TURNS 1

In a recently held press conference led by Tertius Vermeulen, president and CEO of Siemens Inc, Scott Martin, SVP for Siemens business services and Alex Langhans, VP and head of global operations service desk, Siemens reaffirmed its commitment to bringing the best IT outsourcing business and the best in Filipino talents as it targets to double the number of employees for this year. Siemens also announced the change of name for Siemens Business Service (SBS) to Siemens IT Solutions & Services or SIS. It offers IT solutions and IT outsourcing as well as integrated software solutions in conjunction with other Siemens group. The new group is in a promising position. No other IT provider has such close links with a global industrial corporation like Siemens and benefits from access to its customers and the excellent industry know-how of its groups. Siemens IT Solutions and Services has a strong international setup and, thanks to the integration of the PSE sites in Eastern Europe and Asia as well as SISL in India, has a significant presence in low-wage locations. The new group focuses on these key business areas. First of all, it supplements the portfolio of the other Siemens Groups with specific IT know-how: the consolidation of expertise in industry, software and IT solutions gives rise to new, one-stop solutions, with which the Siemens products and systems can be better integrated in the customers' business processes and IT landscapes. Secondly, Siemens IT Solutions and Services further develops the existing outsourcing and IT solution business with external customers, which overall accounts for some 60 percent of its sales. Thirdly, it handles the worldwide operation of Siemens IT and finally develops software for the products and systems of other Siemens Groups. Siemens will definitely be benchmarking again in this field.

An educator for the poor

FR. GEORGE GREGORY GAY, CM, the Superior General of the Congregation of the Mission-better known as the Vincentians--will be visiting the Philippines on Feb. 6. Adamson University is proud to have the privilege of granting Fr. Gay, CM the degree of Doctor of Humanities honoris causa for his many initiatives, his tremendous love for the poor, and his unwavering support for the many pro-poor projects of the Congregation throughout the world. In the field of formal education alone, the Vincentians have four large Universities: DePaul University in Chicago, St. John's University in New York, Niagara University in Niagara and Adamson University in Manila. These universities alone account for around 60,000 students. The Daughters of Charity have one large University, the Universidad de Santa Isabel in Naga, Philippines, and many smaller colleges around the world, generally for the needs of the less privileged sector of the population. Fr. Gay, CM will visit the different houses and ministries of the Vincentians and the Daughters of Charity throughout the Philippines. He will stay through the rest of February.

METRO / A17

New marine species found in Panglao, Bohol, find home in National Museum

SPORTS / A21

Basketball unity achieved; Fiba ready to lift suspension

BUSINESS / B1

Power grid auction fails yet again; PSALM expresses disappointment

ACROSS / A14

Army tells MILF: Move out or face new assault

Now, here comes the mobile landline

By Riza T. Olchondra

MAKING UNLIMITED LOcal calls on your landline is great, and so is having a cellular phone to make calls anywhere, despite the pricier talk time.

But what if you can

NOW, HERE/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
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BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Tuesday, February 6, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 60 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Mahathir says Bush, Blair more evil than Saddam

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—FORMER Malaysian leader Mahathir Mohamad accused George W. Bush and Tony Blair of being more evil and bigger murderers than Saddam Hussein and the Sept. 11 attackers.

In some of his most provocative swipes at the US and British leaders, Mahathir said Monday that their war in Iraq had caused worse terror

MAHATHIR / A13

Palace parties fighting

GMA steps in to cool things down between Lakas and Kampi

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE BREWING STRUGGLE BEtween Lakas-CMD and Kampi has become so serious that President Macapagal-Arroyo has had to step in to cool things down to keep the two biggest parties in the administration coalition away from each other's throat.

Following a lunch meeting with Lakas leaders yesterday in Malacañang, Speaker and Lakas president Jose de Venecia said the President had agreed to give priority support to incumbents seeking reelection in the May elections.

Ms Arroyo also ordered the formation of an arbitration panel to solve conflicts between coalition members running for the same post in the local governments or Congress.

De Venecia said that by upholding the "equity of the incumbent," the President would resolve "75 percent of all the positions" up for grabs in the elections.

In cases where either a Lakas or Kampi or Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) or Liberal Party (LP) member would compete for the same position, De Venecia said the conflict would be resolved by an arbitration panel made up of himself for Lakas, Rep. Luis Villafuerte for Kampi, Frisco San Juan for NPC, and Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and Deputy Speaker Eric Singson for the LP.

De Venecia noted that Lakas had reached a tactical alliance with the LP's Atienza wing whose candidates would run under the Lakas banner.

A Lakas official present during the meeting said the Lakas leaders wanted to be reassured of the President's continued support amid inroads made by Kampi in expanding its membership (it has nosed out the NPC as the second biggest block in the House) through "poaching" of local government officials and lawmakers.

PALACE/ A6

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo gives Sen. Edgardo Angara's reelection bid a boost during the roundtable meeting in Malacañang Monday. The others seated around the table are Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri, Domingo Panganiban, chair of the National Anti-Poverty Commission, Aling Rose, reporter Mia Gonzales and Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House Appropriations Committee. LYN RILLON

Angara endorsed by GMA, confirms offer

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO virtually endorsed the reelection bid of Sen. Edgardo J. Angara by parroting on state television his anticipated campaign slogan—"ANGARA ng kinabukasan," a play on the senator's last name that translates to "The future is bright."

The President's ostensible pitch came after Speaker Jose de Venecia said that Lakas members had expressed their "overwhelming support" for the inclusion of Angara's ex-partners in the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino—former Senators Vicente "Tito" Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta—in the administration's Team Unity senatorial ticket.

"Sana Aling Rose, tuloy tuloy ang iyong biyaya at ang inyong mga anak mas lalong gumanda ang kanilang buhay ... ika nga angara ng kinabukasan," said a beaming President Arroyo which drew a big laugh from the guests at the weekly roundtable forum.

Aling Rose is a businesswoman who was invited to join the discussions. Roughly translated, the President said she hoped that Aling Rose's family would continue to have a better life. Ms Arroyo has underscored economic prosperity as the main goal of her administration.

Angara, who was the first opposition leader to be invited by the Palace to the televised forum which began shortly after the "Hello Garci" scandal in 2004, downplayed his visit to Malacañang and his sitting beside the President as part of his duties to represent the Senate's views.

But he was clearly surprised and flattered by the President's remarks. "Obviously, our infomercial is effective," said Angara of his series of "Angara ng Kinabukasan" television ads depicting his accomplishments in the Senate that began showing a few weeks ago.

Off camera, the President and An-

ANGARA/ A6

BRIG. GEN. Benjamin Dolorfino, chief of the National Capital Region Command, answers questions from the media in a press conference with Presidential Adviser Jesus Dureza and Defense Undersecretary Ramon Santos in Malacañang Monday. LYN RILLON

SULU DETENTION

Gov't confidence in MNLF shaken; ₱450,000 turned over

By Christine O. Avendaño and Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

A HIGH MALACAÑANG OFFIcial said yesterday the detention of an administration peace team in Sulu had damaged government confidence in the Moro National Liberation Front and pledged to look into existing arrangements allowing MNLF guerrillas to continue to bear arms.

"Because of the incident, the level of confidence has been eroded. Let's not fool ourselves," presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza told reporters. "Let's be frank about it. Next time there will be more precautionary measures to be taken."

Officials confirmed P450,000 was handed over to the MNLF following the detention of Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino and about 20 members of his group but they stressed the money was not a payoff for their release but financial assistance for families of Moro fighters killed in "misencounters" with the military.

Dolorfino, Undersecretary for the Peace Process Ramon Santos and their companions were held for two nights last weekend in an MNLF camp in Panamao on Jolo island before they were freed following negotiations involving Dureza and the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

Dureza said the lack of a dis-

GOV'T/ A13

Settling disputes without a trial

By Ann Lourdes C. Lopez
Contributor

WHEN CASES FILED IN COURT ARE RESolved amicably by the litigants outside of the courtroom in one to two months, something good must be happening in the country's judicial system.

In the southern cities of Cagayan de Oro and Davao, trial courts and litigants are discovering the benefits of Court-Annexed Mediation (CAM).

CAM, a new judicial program of the Supreme Court, is implemented by the Philippine Judicial Academy (Philja) in Philippine Mediation Center (PMC) units nationwide.

It involves the settling of disputes by the parties themselves with the assistance of a third party called the mediator.

"As a shortcut to settling cases, mediation is helping litigants financially and emotionally," says Quirino M. Neri, mediator and coordinator of the Cagayan de Oro PMC unit. The unit occupies a second-floor room in the city's Hall of Justice.

He says that litigants appreciate CAM because, compared to a court trial, it is shorter, faster and less taxing.

"And in contrast to being in court where you cannot talk unless the judge asks you to, people can express and unload themselves in mediation," he says.

Ernesto G. Malferrari, a retired judge and a Cagayan de Oro mediator, adds, "Mediation helps people participate actively in resolving their conflicts. In mediation, the best parties to solve the problem are the litigants."

For Rosana Peters, a mediator at the Davao City PMC unit, parties in mediation come to an agreement because it is advantageous to them. She says mediation offers no long-drawn out trial in court, no aggravation of attending court hearings, and less expense because of a quick resolution of the case.

In a civil case for support that Peters suc-

SETTLING/ A13

Help save Earth, go on low-carbon diet

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

WHAT DO MUSICIAN PAOLO Santos, business executive Guillermo Luz, television show hosts JC Gonzalez and Patty Laurel, celebrity mother Chiqui Roa-Puno and jeepney driver Vener Carden have in common?

They are all on a diet.

No, not South Beach or Atkins, but the low-carbon variety promoted by the Klima Climate Change Center.

Klima started in 1999 as the climate change information arm of the Manila Observatory on the campus of Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City.

From there, it went on to conduct research and training to get individuals, companies and government involved in addressing global warming.

Klima's "Be-On-The-Low-Carbon-Diet" campaign aims to enable ordinary individuals to cut

HELP SAVE/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming frequent rains over the eastern sections. The rest of the country will be cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/05/07 SOURCE PAGASA

UNO-Wednesday Group still worlds apart

By TJ Burgonio and Tarra Quismundo

THE UNITY OF THE OPPOSITION APPEARS FAR from being achieved as the differences between the Estrada-led United Opposition (UNO) and the Senate Wednesday Group regarding the composition of the coalition's Senate ticket continued to fester.

UNO president and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay came to the Senate yesterday afternoon, but failed to meet with Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and the rest of the Wednesday group.

Binay had earlier in the day boasted that the coalition would declare within the week its final and complete slate of 12 senatorial candidates, counting on talks with the four incumbent-Wednesday Group members to finally round off its lineup.

"We are going to have talks with political parties, the group of [Villar]," Binay said a few hours before he was to meet with the group at the Senate.

The Wednesday Group, so-called because they get together on that day, includes Villar, Majority Leader Francis Pangilinan, and Senators Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo. They had earlier expressed dismay over UNO's manner of recruiting them into the coalition.

Pangilinan had described UNO as putting up a "take-it-or-leave-it stance" in getting them to join the slate.

Villar declared yesterday that his group would decide whether to join the UNO-led coalition after the Senate's last session day tomorrow.

Recto, for his part, indicated that their joining the opposition or the administration ticket was "50-50."

The Makati mayor arrived at the Senate at around 4:45 p.m., bumped into his rival in the Makati mayoral race, Sen. Lito Lapid, and sat down for a talk with opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson at the executive lounge for some 15 minutes.

But all throughout, Villar did not leave his seat at the rostrum.

"I have to leave because I got a call and needed to go back to the office," Binay said, saying he understood that Villar could not meet with him because he was presiding over deliberations on key legislation at the session hall.

He maintained that UNO wasn't imposing any condition on the Wednesday Group and would still admit the four senators into the slate "if that's what Villar still wants."

Binay said he would arrange a meeting with Villar through Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. Villar also indicated he would meet with the mayor within the next few days.

UNO, headed by ousted President Joseph Estrada, announced last week its first eight official candidates, but left out the four senators. Its leaders, however, had been quick to assure the Wednesday Group that the last four slots were reserved for them.

The Wednesday Group has been pushing for a slate with the core composed of incumbent senators, a position that puts them directly at odds with the UNO.

"I've been saying all along that we make public our decision after we adjourn sessions. We're trying to finish our job here. The campaign period is 20 days; it's too long a period for us to make announcements," Villar told reporters, an hour before Binay showed up.

"If we make the decision, we will have zero-based analysis. They should not think we're harboring any grudge. We just want to finish our job first," he added, when asked if their group was still keen on joining the UNO-led coalition.

Former Sen. John Osmeña, who like Lacson was drafted by UNO, appealed for unity among the opposition senators.

Pimentel and Sen. Luisa "Loi" Ejercito said the kinks could still be ironed out, saying that the question that remained to be resolved was if all four senators could be accommodated. Ejercito said the four senators, except for Arroyo, were a shoo-in.

Arroyo was among the opposition congressmen who initiated the impeachment complaint against Estrada on corruption charges in late 2000.

Erap lawyer says Atong deal OK if...

By Norman Bordadora

DEPOSED PRESIDENT JOSEPH Estrada will not get in the way of Charlie "Atong" Ang's plea bargaining agreement if the deal will exclude a clause that implicates the ex-leader in a conspiracy to divert P130 million in tobacco excise taxes in 1998.

The defense panel favors the plea bargain deal "in principle" but the document needs some "reworking," said Rene Saguisag, a lawyer for Estrada.

Ang, a former close friend of Estrada's, is the ex-President's coaccused in the plunder case filed with the Sandiganbayan.

In a supplemental comment to the plea bargaining agreement forged by Ang with government prosecutors, Saguisag said Ang's admission that he had conspired with Estrada to divert the P130 million should be deleted.

"This is precisely why (Estrada is) not against (the objective of Ang cutting a deal and being released). (Estrada) should have been consulted from the start. We could have worked it out together," Saguisag said.

Instead, Saguisag said, the plea bargaining agreement was used by government prosecutors to come up with a politically damaging document against the former President and his allies just months before the national and local elections.

"Unfortunately, the prosecution arguably misbehaved as political propagandists of the administration and focused more on forging, yes, forging an anti-Estrada document for all the world to see forever, if not corrected," Saguisag said.

Paragraph two of the agreement unnecessarily and falsely said that Ang admitted to the facts upon which plunder under the amended information had been committed, according to Saguisag.

The lawyer noted that Ang, in another submission to the Sandiganbayan, said that he was "not involved in all the predicate charges."

Ang, in a memorandum, admitted to bringing P130 million to Estrada at his residence on Polk Street in Greenhills, San Juan, in 1998 and to taking P25 million from the amount as his share.

"A new agreement should be prepared as this trial will be studied by students of law. We should avoid a trial and error," Saguisag said.

Last week, he objected to the plea bargain deal because it contained Ang's admissions that may be used to find Estrada guilty of plunder.

Under the plea bargaining agreement, Ang pleaded guilty to the lesser offense of corruption of a public official, which is punishable by only as much as six years.

In exchange, he shall no longer be tried for plunder as a co-principal of the former President.

Also, Ang shall testify in cases the government is prosecuting in which he has personal knowledge.

Get a grip, Miriam advises actor-politicians

By Cynthia D. Balana

SEN. MIRIAM DEFENSOR-SANTIAGO yesterday urged actors and others in show business who want to run in the May elections to first get a grasp of politics and public administration before joining the fray.

"It's not really that I'm against actors but I can say that I'm not in favor of people in show business running for public office unless they have a college degree. Most of them are not prepared for the task of legislation," Santiago told reporters in an interview.

She said actors who did not have any competence in public administration or the lawmaking process should not exploit their popularity by running for public office.

Santiago said she was not prepared for the spectacle of another group of actors joining the Senate this year.

She said a public official should have higher qualifications than a voter because he or she occupies high political status.

"It should not be the case that anyone who can vote can be voted for," she said.

She said that based on her experience in the Senate, most actors who became senators had proved their critics right.

"I would say that they did live up to the dire expectations of their critics," she said.

Santiago said that while she was willing to grant actors the presumption of honesty and efficiency in terms of hard work, she said there was really a "deficiency in the qualification of competence."

"It's not a question of will power or a desire to be competent. It has to be the result not only of an aptitude for the subject but also of intense education on that particular subject, public administration or politics," she said.

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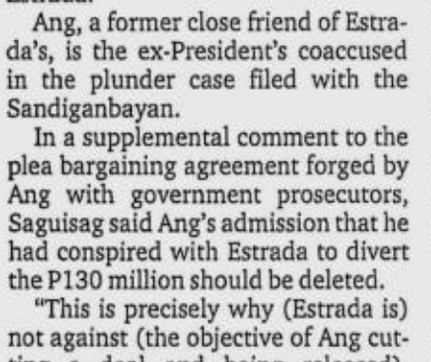

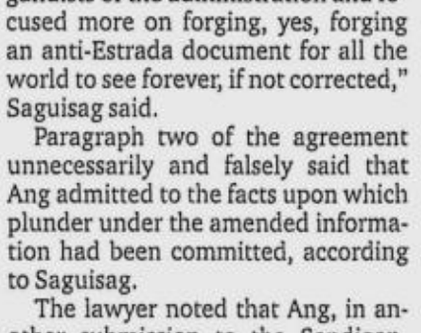

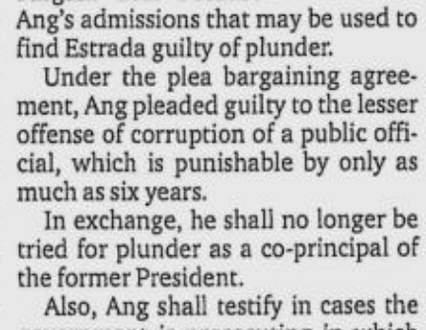

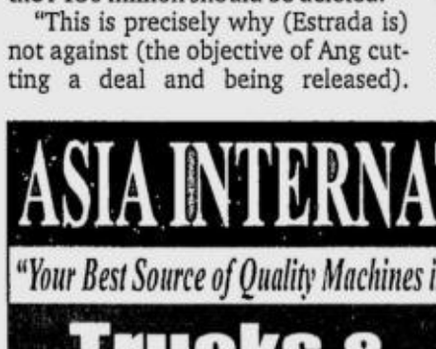

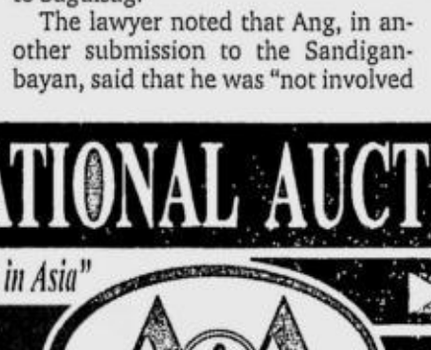

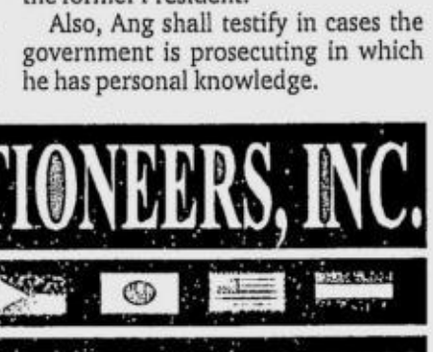

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Exemption of newsmen, lawyers, MDs from antiterror act sought

By Cynthia D. Balana

JOURNALISTS, LAWYERS AND DOCTORS WILL be exempted from mandatory disclosure of information such as communications with their sources as well as with their clients and patients under the proposed Anti-Terrorism Act.

This was announced by Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel who said the protection of sources by the three groups of professionals was one of the 89 amendments to the controversial measure, now in the home stretch of the law-making process.

Pimentel said that about 95 percent of the amendments were accepted by the bill's principal sponsor, Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile.

In justifying the exemption of journalists, Pimentel cited Section 4 of Article III of the Constitution which reads: "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people to peaceably assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances."

This means that information on the whereabouts of terrorists in connection with stories written by journalists would not be subjected to compulsory disclosure, Pimentel said.

"In fact, there is more reason to exempt the correspondences, messages and records of journalists from being monitored, bugged, recorded or subpoenaed for use under legal compunction in investigation or terrorist trials than communications between doctors and patients," he said.

Another major amendment adopted by the Senate was the reduction of the period of detention of terror suspects without a warrant of arrest to not more than three days.

Originally, the maximum period for detention without court warrant as proposed in the measure was 15 days. This was later reduced to five days upon the recommendation of Senators Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Franklin Drilon.

According to Pimentel, the Constitution provides that during the suspension of the writ of habeas corpus, any person arrested or detained for rebellion shall be judicially charged within three days, otherwise he shall be released.

"The three-day period during which a person may be detained without charges, even during a rebellion or invasion, is a constitutional demarcation line that must not be breached," he said.

Pimentel said that a related amendment would require law enforcers to immediately bring any person arrested on the charge or suspicion of terrorism before a judge, official of the Commission on Human Rights or justice of the Sandiganbayan or Court of Appeals.

He said this requirement would discourage law enforcers from detaining the suspect without just cause, or subjecting them to abuse or physical maltreatment.

Vatican ecumenism expert here today

ONE OF THE WORLD'S TOP THEOLOGIANS will be in town to preside over an important Vatican conference to promote and nurture the spirit of ecumenism in the Philippines and Asia.

German Cardinal Walter Kasper is set to arrive today for the second installment of the ecumenism seminar organized by the Vatican's Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity. The first one was held in South Korea in July 2006.

Kasper, 73, is a leading authority on ecumenism or the dialogue among Christian churches.

He has been the president of the important Vatican council since he was appointed by the late Pope John Paul II in 2001.

One of his widely reported papers on ecumenism was on the spirit of "Dominus Jesus," the controversial document released in 2000 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, then headed by Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger before the latter became Pope Benedict XVI.

The document stated that "there is no salvation outside the Church." This angered many Christian denominations, as well as nonChristian religions.

In another paper, this time on the "current problems in ecumenical theology," Kasper wrote that "existing and undeniable differences do not mean the end of dialogue, on the contrary, they do represent a challenge to dialogue... Ecumenical dialogue is... dialogue in truth and in love. Therefore, ecumenism is no one-way street, but a reciprocal learning process."

The Vatican seminar on ecumenism will start tomorrow until Sunday at the Pope Pius XII Catholic Center in Manila. The theme is "The Search for Christian Unity, Where We Stand Today." *Christian V. Esguerra*

Gov't earmarks P123M to keep RP bird flu-free

THE GOVERNMENT HAS CREATED A P122.8-million fund to keep bird flu out of the country, officials said Monday.

The fund, part of the soon-to-be-signed 2007 national budget, will be available to five government agencies, led by the Department of Agriculture (DA), to implement the Avian Influenza Protection Program, Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said. The Philippines remains free of the deadly H5N1 bird flu virus.

The program will focus on monitoring areas at risk of infection from migratory birds, upgrading laboratories, building up rapid-action capability in case of an outbreak and other activities, Andaya said in a statement.

The program designates the agriculture department to coordinate with the health, environment, trade and local government departments to keep the country avian flu-free.

The Department of Health earlier drafted a bird flu response plan that details actions to be taken by each department, in coordination with an interagency task force, during four "danger-level scenarios," said Dr. Lydon Lee Suy, the health department's avian flu program chief.

Andaya said other parts of the budget, such as the government's calamity fund, could be tapped in the event of an outbreak.

The Philippines, meanwhile, has banned the importation of live birds and poultry from Japan after reports of a bird flu outbreak in that country, the DA said yesterday.

The ban was needed to protect the Filipino people as well as the country's poultry industry, said the DA on its website.

"There is a possibility that travelers may bring in pet birds, poultry and poultry products from Japan," the statement quoted Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap as saying.

Last November a similar ban on all live bird and poultry imports from South Korea was issued after the bird flu virus was detected in that country.

The Philippines, Singapore and Brunei are the only bird flu-free countries in Southeast Asia.

In an interview with Agence France Presse, the United Nations official heading the global fight against avian influenza has said that significantly reducing the risk of the disease in the region hardest hit by the virus could take up to a decade.

Dr. David Nabarro said changing traditional farming practices across Southeast Asia to reduce the risk of a human pandemic would take several years and a huge political commitment.

He said, however, that the virus, which has killed 142 people in Southeast Asia and 165 worldwide since resurfacing in 2003, did not appear to be mutating into a form easily transmissible between humans.

"During the time that I've been in this job, I have seen no increase in the risk of a pandemic," he said.

"The virus does not seem to have evolved in ways that suggest that it's moving toward being more transmissible between humans; the risk is staying about the same," he said in Indonesia, the nation hardest-hit by the avian flu.

Scientists fear the deadly H5N1 flu strain could mutate into a form easily transmissible between humans, sparking a pandemic that could kill millions.

H5N1 has resurfaced in humans in Indonesia after an apparent lull with five deaths this year, and in poultry outside the region including, for the first time, in Britain.

Awareness of the threat has increased hugely as well as the need for effective responses from government, said Nabarro, who has headed efforts to fight the disease since September 2005.

"I've seen a huge increase in awareness of problems of highly pathogenic avian influenza, the need for a strong animal health sector, good veterinary services and an effective response in individual countries and in the regional level, particularly in this region, and globally," Nabarro said.

"It's not a level where I can say everything's fine, but what I am seeing is things moving in the right direction in most countries, which is immensely gratifying because it's a sign that things are moving well together, that people are prepared to work with each other for the common good."

AP; AFP

Pass bill vs climate change, solons urged

By DJ Yap

AS SCIENTISTS STRUCK ALARM bells over the threat of global warming, Greenpeace pushed yesterday for the "11th hour passage" of a bill seeking to alleviate climate change through renewable energy sources.

With Congress set to adjourn by Friday, the environment group urged legislators to propel the issue of climate change to the top of the agenda by passing the renewable energy bill pending in the Senate.

"It will take a tremendous amount of political will—and a miracle," said Von Hernandez, Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaign director.

He took President Macapagal-Arroyo to task for not certifying the bill, now on second reading in the Senate, as urgent, despite her assurances that the country "will march with the world in the struggle against global warming."

The RE bill provides mechanisms for the use and development of clean and renewable indigenous sources of energy, which would result in lower carbon dioxide and other toxic emissions from power generation using fossil fuels.

Hernandez said there was very little time now for the Senate to approve the bill, pending in the energy committee headed by Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, since the 13th Congress ends this week.

At a press briefing in Quezon City yesterday, he said government inaction on the RE bill was both "contemptible and hypocritical," considering its pronouncements of concern over the long term effects of global warming.

"Climate change impacts have been manifested in the country in devastating storms, floods, extreme precipitation and droughts, leading to calamities which have destroyed lives and property, and have crippled an already struggling economy," Hernandez said.

Last Friday, a new United Nations report issued the strongest warning yet from the international scientific community about the effects of global warming, particularly climate change.

The report from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change meeting in Paris concluded that global inaction to address greenhouse gas emissions could increase the earth's average temperature between 1.1 degrees and 6.4 degrees Celsius above 1980-1999 levels by 2095.

Such an increase may lead to "more drought, heat waves, floods and stronger hurricanes, rapid melting of ice sheets and rising heat levels," Greenpeace said.

Hernandez said the Philippines, which had been cited as one of the top five risk-prone areas, had been bearing the brunt of climate change impacts for more than a decade because of its geography and location.

"The RE bill must be passed and strengthened with legally binding targets to reflect our sincere determined response to the (IPCC's) dire warnings," he said.

Disaster preparedness programs should also be put in place in "hot spots" found to be vulnerable to violent weather, particularly coastal areas, he added.

Hernandez cited a 2004 study by geoscientist Esteban Godilano, which identified Regions 8, 5 and 2 as the most vulnerable to typhoons and tropical cyclones.

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Keep polls clean, literally

WHEN MANILA Archbishop Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales calls for clean elections, he leaves no room for equivocation—by "clean" he means "waste-free" elections.

Rosales yesterday appealed to the public, particularly political candidates, to "pay careful attention to the health and environmental effects of all campaign materials."

"Preventing and minimizing campaign waste through the ecological and judicious use of resources will lessen the volume of discards that will only end up being littered, burned or thrown into our dying rivers and obnoxious dumps that continue to disfigure and contaminate God's creation," said the 74-year-old prelate yesterday in a statement.

Rosales said he was throwing his support behind the Ecological Waste Coalition, a group advocating for a clean environment consistent with the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. *Christian V. Esguerra*

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Marie France

REFORM Our Land Administration System *PASS* the LARA Bill NOW!

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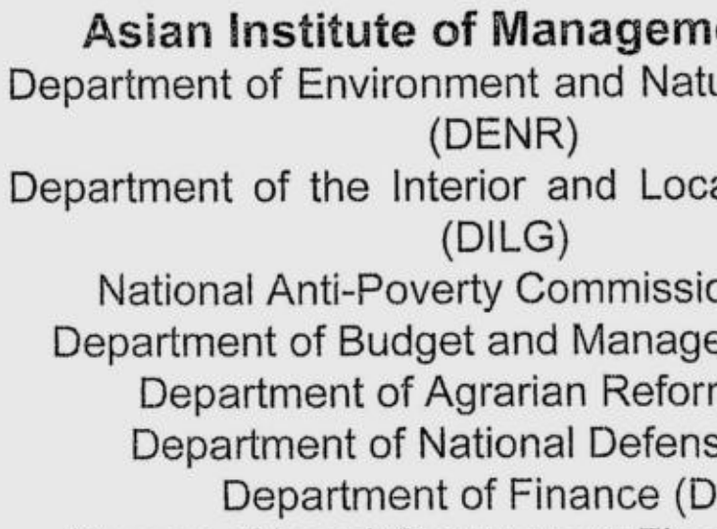
Adopted in a resolution by the representatives of the following organizations:

League of Municipalities of the Philippines (LMP)
Chamber of Real Estate and Builders Association (CREBA)
Geodetic Engineers of the Philippines (GEP)
Bankers Association of the Philippines (BAP)
Asian Institute of Journalism and Communication (AIJC)
Ateneo School of Government (ASG)
Asian Institute of Management (AIM)
Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)
Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG)
National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC)
Department of Budget and Management (DBM)
Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)
Department of National Defense (DND)
Department of Finance (DOF)
Bureau of Local Government Finance (BLGF)
Land Management Bureau (LMB)
Social Security System (SSS)

NAPC Basic Sectors Council
Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)
Ayala Lands
Management Association of the Philippines (MAP)
United Architects of the Philippines (UAP)
Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS)
SEAMEO Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA)
The Asia Foundation
Court of Appeals of the Philippines
Liga ng mga Barangay
Municipal Government of Naval, Biliran
National Tax Research Center (NTRC)
National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA)
National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP)
Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP)
Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB)
National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA)
Public Estates Authority (PEA)
Bureau of Internal Revenue (BIR)



THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, February 6, 2007
5th Week in Ordinary Time
Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs

1st Reading: Gen 1:20-2:4
Gospel: Mark 7:1-13

One day the Pharisees gathered around Jesus and with them were some teachers of the Law who had just come from Jerusalem.

They noticed that some of his disciples were eating their meal with unclean hands, that is, without washing them. (...) So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law asked him, "Why do your disciples not follow the tradition of the elders, but eat with unclean hands?"

Jesus answered, "You, shallow people! How well Isaiah prophesied of you when he wrote: This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. The worship they offer me is worthless, for what they teach are only human rules. You even put aside the commandment of God to hold fast to human tradition."

And Jesus commented, "You have a fine way of disregarding the commandment of God in order to implant your own tradition. For example, Moses said: Do your duty to your father and your mother, and: Whoever curses his father or his mother is to be put to death. But according to you someone could say to his father or mother: 'I already declared Corban, which means "offered to God," what you could have expected from me.' In this case, you no longer let him do anything for a father or mother. So you nullify the word of God through the tradition you have handed on. And you do many other things like that."

Commentary

Now the next days of creation: waters and all that swims and all that is winged in the air; then creatures great and small; and lastly us-in the image of God, male and female, the divine image (in relationship, diversity, communion). Everything is given to us to have dominion over—as God has dominion over all—and it is all very good. And God rests, contemplates his creation, and teaches us how to live: creating, imaging, in relationship, reflecting the goodness of God, magnificent diversity, contemplating and resting with one another on earth with God.

These are the essentials and what Jesus is concerned with. Traditions are fine if they serve creation, life, relationships, the reflecting of the image of the divine. But they must be discarded if they do not. It is God's commandment that is crucial-not what can nullify and break the Word of the Lord.

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Witness says Leviste asked him to mediate dispute

By Tina G. Santos

A 64-YEAR-OLD DRAFTSMAN OF former Batangas Gov. Antonio Leviste yesterday surfaced at the National Bureau of Investigation to give his statement on the Jan. 12 killing of Leviste's longtime friend and aide Rafael de las Alas.

Leviste has admitted to killing De las Alas.

Manolito Ambrosio, through his counsel Bairon San Pedro, claimed that he came out only now because "he didn't know what to do; no one has been inviting me for any investigation."

"My client got the summons from the NBI only last Thursday," San Pedro told reporters. "We heard that (Senior State) Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco directed the NBI to get the statement of those who could possibly shed light on the case.

San Pedro said Ambrosio had been working for Leviste, initially as a driver, for the past 40 years.

Ambrosio's name apparently appeared in a logbook as among the last people to enter Leviste's office at LPL Towers in Makati City where De las Alas was shot.

"But my client is not part of the incident that happened on the morning of Jan. 12," San Pedro told reporters after an NBI investigator took his client's statement.

Before the shooting, Ambrosio told the NBI that he saw Leviste arrive at his office at around 9 a.m. De las Alas came in shortly after and just passed him by.

"It was the first time in many years that (De las Alas) ignored me," Ambrosio said in his statement, adding that De las Alas appeared disturbed.

De las Alas was called by Leviste to his office, and shortly after, Ambrosio said he heard De las Alas shout "*Ayoko ng kape. Alak ang gusto ko* (I don't want coffee. I want liquor)."

Ambrosio, who said the victim was among his wedding sponsors, said that Leviste also called him into his office and offered him a glass of red wine.

He said Leviste and De las Alas appeared to be engaged in an argument.

Ambrosio said he was even asked by Leviste if he could mediate between him and De las Alas.

"*Pwede mo ba kami pag-ayusin* (Can you settle our differences)?" Ambrosio quoted Leviste as saying. To which he answered: "*Bakit ano ba ang problema? Hindi ko naman alam ang problema nyo* (Why? What's your problem? I don't even know your problem)?"

De las Alas reportedly shouted back at Leviste, saying "*Maaayos lang ang problema pag isa sa atin wala na* (The problem will be solved when one of us is gone)," Ambrosio said.

Leviste then ordered him to leave the room, Ambrosio said.

Ambrosio also told the NBI that he saw no evidence that either Leviste or De las Alas were armed.

After a few minutes, Ambrosio said he heard about four successive gunshots, prompting him to ask a certain Elsa, reportedly assigned at the front desk of the LPL Towers, to call the police.

Ambrosio said he "sensed something bad was happening inside Leviste's office."

The draftsman said he tried to go back into Leviste's office but at the hallway, he met the former governor who ordered him to leave and go home.

Earlier, Velasco recommended that Leviste, along with some John and Jane Does, be charged with murder for the killing of De las Alas, citing treachery, cruelty and premeditation in the killing.

Angara endorsed by GMA, confirms offer

From page A1

gara engaged in a lengthy conversation on the economy and government policy where the former executive secretary of ousted President Joseph Estrada clearly showed he had Ms Arroyo's ear.

Angara revealed that he was invited by the Palace to join Team Unity but that he neither accepted nor rejected the offer. "I told them I'd consider it," said Angara, who said he would announce his decision whether to run or not and which party he would join in the next 48 hours.

Angara said that LDP would not field an independent slate and that if he chose to run, "I'll be an independent candidate but I will most likely join a political alliance." Although he admitted that he was not invited to join the opposition's UNO team ("They don't like me there"), he still played it coy as to what slate he would join.

SEN. Edgardo Angara is mobbed by the media after attending a roundtable meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo in Malacañang. LYN RILLON

'I'm all for unity'

Asked whether he considered himself an opposition or administration lawmaker, Angara replied: "I'm a senator, I'm an independent thinker. I support whatever I believe is good for the country."

Angara said that he was warm to the Team Unity concept of the administration. "I'm all for unity but unity is a big, ambiguous term unless you flesh it out in terms of program and personalities who will compose it. Unity is meaningless unless you relate it to platform or program or track record of promoting unity," said Angara. He stressed that he was not a part of a package deal with Sotto and Oreta. The three are collectively known as the ASO group.

Aside from Sotto and Oreta, De Venecia, in an interview with reporters after a party caucus hosted by the President in Malacañang, said Senators Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo were "popular choices" of Lakas members for inclusion in Team Unity.

However, De Venecia admitted that the Lakas members were not so keen on the other half of the "Wednesday Group"—Senate President Manuel Villar and Sen. Francis Pangilinan. "They have not yet made up their minds," said De Venecia, referring to reports that Villar and Pangilinan would join UNO.

Lakas choices for Senate

De Venecia said that among the top choices of Lakas members for the Senate were Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, Bukidnon Rep. Miguel Zubiri, Rep. Prospero Pichay and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

De Venecia said Lakas would get "one-third to one-half" of the Team Unity slots. "There will be proportional representation [of coalition members]," said De Venecia, who confirmed the withdrawal of their interest in running of his wife Gina, former First Lady Imelda Marcos and Rep. Gilberto Teodoro.

Palace . . .

From page A1

The Lakas official, who refused to be identified because he was not authorized to divulge details of the meeting, quoted the President as declaring "I am for Lakas" and ordering the "raid" of the Lakas ranks by Kampi to stop.

The same official explained that Kampi, the brainchild of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and Interior Secretary Ronaldo Puno, wanted to use the midterm elections as its launching pad to consolidate power in the President's own party by 2010 when she is expected to step down from office.

"They (Kampi) are operating on the premise that you can't leave power without covering your flanks," the official said.

But the Lakas official said that Kampi's political ambitions were threatening the core of the coalition because they were practically prodding party mates and even family members to run against each other in the May polls.

"The Lakas member might still beat the Kampi member in a one-on-one but it will lead some coalition members to sulk and eventually question the President for turning against them when they had stayed with her through her most serious political crisis," the source said.

An official of Kampi just laughed off the "creeping paranoia" of Lakas leaders, saying that the party had no intention of prying the House leadership away from Lakas. But the same official conceded that the President would prefer that the power of numbers resided in her own party rather than form a party where she would be a mere guest.

Help save Earth, go on low-carbon diet

From page A1

down on personal carbon dioxide emissions.

Every Filipino must do what he can to reduce carbon dioxide emission because global warming is upon us, and it can only get worse, Klima program manager Angela Consuelo S. Ibay told the INQUIRER.

The UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, in its report released in Paris on Friday, came to the "unequivocal" conclusion that there was global evidence of climate change caused by fossil fuel emissions.

It warned of melting ice sheets, rising sea levels, worsening droughts and stronger hurricanes and storms in years to come.

Put simply, global warming refers to the rise in global temperatures because of a significant increase in the amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, such as carbon dioxide, methane, chlorofluorocarbons and ozone, which trap heat.

Increased human activity

Klima said the culprit behind the increase in greenhouse gases was increased human activity, as indicated by automobile exhaust fumes, factory emissions, intensive agriculture and animal waste handling, burning of fossil fuels and clearing of forests.

Thus, from 278 parts per million during pre-industrial times, the concentration of carbon dioxide (which accounts for 25 percent of the greenhouse gases) in the atmosphere has risen to 380 ppm today, resulting in a steady rise in the earth's temperature.

Ibay said physical changes due to global warming were everywhere, including the Philippines.

These include the late onset of the cold season this year, increase in the strength and frequency of typhoons entering the Philippines, and unusually hot summers and wet rainy seasons in recent years.

Elsewhere, global warming has been blamed for the intensified strength of hurricanes in the United States, melting of ice in Antartica and Greenland, retreat of glaciers in the Himalayas and Kilimanjaro in Africa and unusually warm weather in the normally cold parts of Europe.

ELEVEN TIPS

KLIMA'S LOW CARBON DIET tips are as follows:

1. Use compact fluorescent lamps instead of incandescent bulbs. These use 70-80 percent less energy and last at least 8-13 times longer.
2. Observe the 3Rs—reduce, reuse, recycle.
3. Buy energy-efficient appliances.
4. Walk, bike or carpool.
5. Patronize mass transportation.
6. Turn off lights and appliances when not in use.
7. Unplug cellular phone chargers when the battery is fully charged.
8. Conserve water.
9. Prevent unnecessary idling of engines.
10. Avoid aggressive driving, rapid acceleration or sudden stops.
11. Keep vehicles in good running condition.

Local action needed

"[Global warming] is a global concern, but local action is needed," Ibay said.

By getting on the low carbon diet, Ibay said individuals could easily do their share.

To show individuals how they can contribute, Klima got the support of well-known personalities, who believe in the cause, to show what little things they can do in their own homes, or changes in lifestyle they can adopt to prevent further global warming.

JC Gonzalez talks about how he no longer keeps his car engine running when the car is parked to reduce his CO_2 emission.

Patty Laurel introduces students to the virtues of recycling materials such as newspapers.

Paolo Santos, for his part, tells people to remove their chargers when the cellular phone battery is full to save on electricity, while Guillermo Luz campaigns for reduced use of paper in offices.

Avoid sudden stops

Vener Cardenas appeals to bus and jeepney drivers to curb unhealthy road habits such as sudden stops and starts to reduce engine emissions.

Chiqui Roa-Puno talks about reducing energy use in the home by simply turning off faucets and the lights when not in use.

Ibay said posters showing these people were distributed in schools to make students aware of what they can do to save the environment.

A separate campaign targets companies and industries, exhorting them to reduce their use of energy and contribute to the fight against climate change.

Now, here comes the mobile landline

From page A1

make unlimited local calls for free and even send and receive text messages on the go?

There is such a service provided by local telcos, said Edgardo Cabarrios, common carrier and authorization director of the National Telecommunications Commission.

How does it work?

All the wireless local loop services currently offered in the country run on CDMA (Code Division Multiple Access) technology, the basis for 3G.

CDMA works by converting speech into digital data and by leaving out noise such as computer static and background sounds. The data are then given a unique code and sent as a radio signal over a wireless network.

This feature enables CDMA networks to cram up to 20 times more calls into a single radio frequency than traditional systems, with very little chance of calls being dropped.

Because each call is uniquely coded, there is almost no chance for crossed lines and eavesdropping.

Aside from voice calls, CDMA supports text messaging and data transmission over the Internet.

A CDMA platform also monitors the amount of power a system and handset need at any time. It transmits at the lowest power levels possible, allowing for longer talk time and standby time. CDMA handsets can also incorporate smaller batteries.

How to get a 'mobile landline'

Bayan Telecommunications Inc. (BayanTel) is aggressively promoting the service under the brand name SPAN, giving it the slogan "ang landline na mobile."

Chito M. Franco, BayanTel vice president for the corporate and business market, said at the Microsoft Press Boot Camp on Jan. 30 that SPAN subscribers could use a Huawei device that looks like the traditional wireless landline unit, or Nokia mobile phones such as the 6235 and other models.

The SPAN service allows subscribers to make unlimited local calls, as in a fixed landline, but the handsets are not much different from cellular phones because the user can text and make calls even in another city—as long as there is a base station for SPAN in the area.

Initial outlay

The handsets also have the traditional features such as caller ID, call waiting, three-way calling, call forwarding, speed dialing and security PIN.

A subscriber's initial outlay for the service ranges from P2,800 to P8,600, which includes payment for the handset.

The lowest payment includes the basic ZTE handset and the priciest includes a Nokia mobile phone that supports CDMA.

After the initial cash outlay, the subscriber pays a monthly charge of P749, which includes unlimited calls to any local landline.

Sending a text message will cost the subscriber P1 per message on top of the monthly service fee, while placing a call to any cellular network will cost P12.50 per minute on top of the monthly SPAN fee.

Booming

SPAN is currently available in Manila, Marikina, Pasig, Pasay, Caloocan and Quezon City, and 12 cities in the provinces, including Davao City, General Santos, Tacloban, Legazpi and Naga.

"Bayantel will expand the service to 80 percent of Metro Manila within the year," Franco said.

The telco is aggressively pushing SPAN because the service has boomed, accounting for 30 percent of its subscribers and 20 percent of its revenues since its launch in July 2006, according to Tunde Fafunwa, BayanTel chief executive consultant.

Mango brand

Digital Telecommunications Phils. offers the same service under the Mango brand to complement its fixed line offerings.

Digitel's Mango service entails an initial outlay of P1,000, whether the customer chooses to get the ZTE, Huawei or Nokia handset, according to the telco's customer service department.

The monthly charge is P600. Text messaging within the Digitel network is 40 centavos and texting to another network is 80 centavos on top of the monthly charge. Calls to cellular phones will cost the user P13.50 on top of the monthly charge.

Mango is only available in Rizal province and certain areas of Quezon City, such as Araneta Center, Teacher's Village and Libis.

Bundling

Interestingly, the two largest telcos in the country are not all that interested in the wireless local loop as a stand-alone service.

Globe Telecom Inc. said it was keen on bundling wireless local loop with other services.

The Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. said it used to offer wireless landline in areas served by subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp. but stopped offering the service because it was difficult and costly to maintain.

Graft raps filed vs customs chief

By Norman Bordadora

A NONGOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION YESterday filed graft charges against Commissioner Napoleon Morales and nine other Bureau of Customs officials for their alleged involvement in the spiriting out of 100,000 kilos of meat from a customs warehouse last year.

Lawyer Pablo Bautista, himself a former customs official and current chair of the Foundation for the Uplift of Public Revenues, alleged in the NGO's complaint before the Ombudsman that the seized meat was in Morales' custody when it was taken out of the warehouse in Manila.

Aside from Morales, the NGO also filed charges against Morales' chief of staff James Enriquez, Task Force Anti-Smuggling (TFAS) executive director Alexander Arcilla, Port of Manila district collector Horacio Suansing Jr., customs officials Davinio Catbagan, Facundo Bitanga, Romeo Fernando Jr., Diomedes Cabaluna and Boy Reyes, and customs broker Sulpicio Estrada.

The group said Morales also violated Article 239 of the Revised Penal Code when he created a Special Customs Area under his office allegedly without lawful authority.

It was from this special customs area, contracted from Sigma Seven Warehousing Inc., that the 100 tons of seized meat were taken out after being confiscated for having been misdeclared.

"It was while under the custody of the office of the commissioner that most of the frozen meat was spirited out of the warehouse," Bautista charged.

"This was further aggravated due to his failure to order the physical examination or inventory and assessment of the cargo, resulting in the loss of revenue on the part of the government," he said.

Bautista was a former deputy director for legal affairs of the National Anti-Smuggling Task Force and was also a legal counsel for the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (Isafp).

The NGO's complaint showed that on Aug. 25, 2006, a shipment of four container vans arrived at the Port of Manila and were declared to contain "frozen mackerel."

With the alleged help of some customs officials, Asia Golden Ark Marketing Center and its broker Sulpicio Estrada "misdeclared and misclassified" the shipment as frozen mackerel to avoid paying the appropriate but much higher duties.

The shipment was seized two days later by the anti-smuggling task force which found it to be frozen meat and not fish.

The containers were taken to the commissioner's customs special area allegedly on the orders of TFAS director Arcilla.

The meat was forfeited in favor of the government.

"However, a few days later, the shipment was released and transported irregularly out of the customs premises through the cooperation and facilitation of some customs officials, particularly Enriquez, Suansing, Arcilla, Catbagan and Bitanga," Bautista said.

He said the shipment was released without any authority and without paying duties, taxes and penalty charges, "thus, resulting to a huge revenue loss."

It was also alleged the shipment was further pilfered when it was transported to Pampanga for condemnation.

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BIR targets real property lessors to boost revenue

By Cynthia D. Balana

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE HAS a new target in its campaign to boost tax collections.

BIR Commissioner Jose Mario Buñag issued a directive to all regional directors and revenue district officers to go after rental businesses and real property lessors who are perennial tax evaders.

The campaign focuses on lands, lots, houses, warehouses, establishments used for commercial/business undertakings, subdivisions, townhouses, apartments, condominium units, and dormitories and boarding houses.

BIR officials said some of those engaged in this kind of business had not been issuing official receipts to their tenants, thereby depriving the government of the correct taxes.

Buñag said the new targets would be included in the tax-mapping activity of checking the registration and bookkeeping records of the taxpayers concerned and, likewise, their compliance with the issuance of official receipts (ORs).

He also directed field officials to coordinate with, and gather pertinent information from building/subdivision/condominium administrators to ensure that properties being rented or leased out are duly monitored by the BIR and proper taxes are collected.

Buñag, however, reminded tax officials to observe existing procedures in the conduct of the tax-mapping activity to avoid conflict between themselves and the taxpayers.

Meanwhile, the BIR extended the deadline of its One-Time Administrative Abatement Program to March 30, under Revenue Regulation No. 15-2006, to give more time to qualified taxpayers to settle their tax liabilities with the BIR without having to pay penalties, surcharges and interest.

Buñag also extended the bureau's Improved Voluntary Assessment Program (IVAP) to March 30.

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Globe rate cut ordered

ACTING ON THE complaint of consumer advocacy group TXTPower, the National Telecommunication Commission (NTC) has ordered Globe Telecom Inc. to restore the old rates for its unlimited text messaging pending a final ruling.

In a letter addressed to Globe vice president Froilan M. Castelo, NTC Commissioner Abraham Abesamis ordered the firm to "hold in abeyance the implementation of the new unlimited text service and restore the unlimited text promo priced at P10 for one day, P25 for two days and P50 for five days."

Abesamis cited TXTPower's complaint, which said Globe's newspaper advertisements published on Feb. 1, showed that the telco's four-day Unlimitxt now costs P80 or P20 a day. The charge for the old Unlimitxt was P50 for five days or about P10 a day.

The consumer advocacy group said the replacement of Unlimitxt with the new promos (Unlimitxt, Daytime Unlimited Texting, Nighttime Unlimited Texting and TXTPlus) "is obviously a rate hike." *Riza T. Olchondra*

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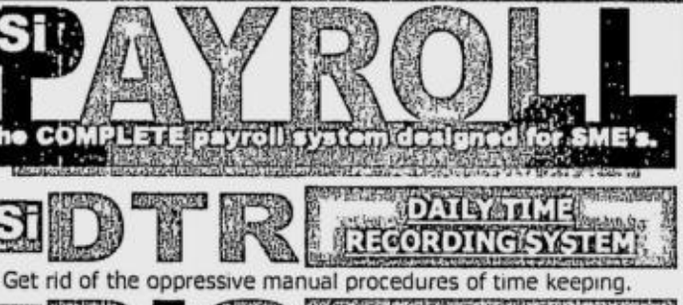
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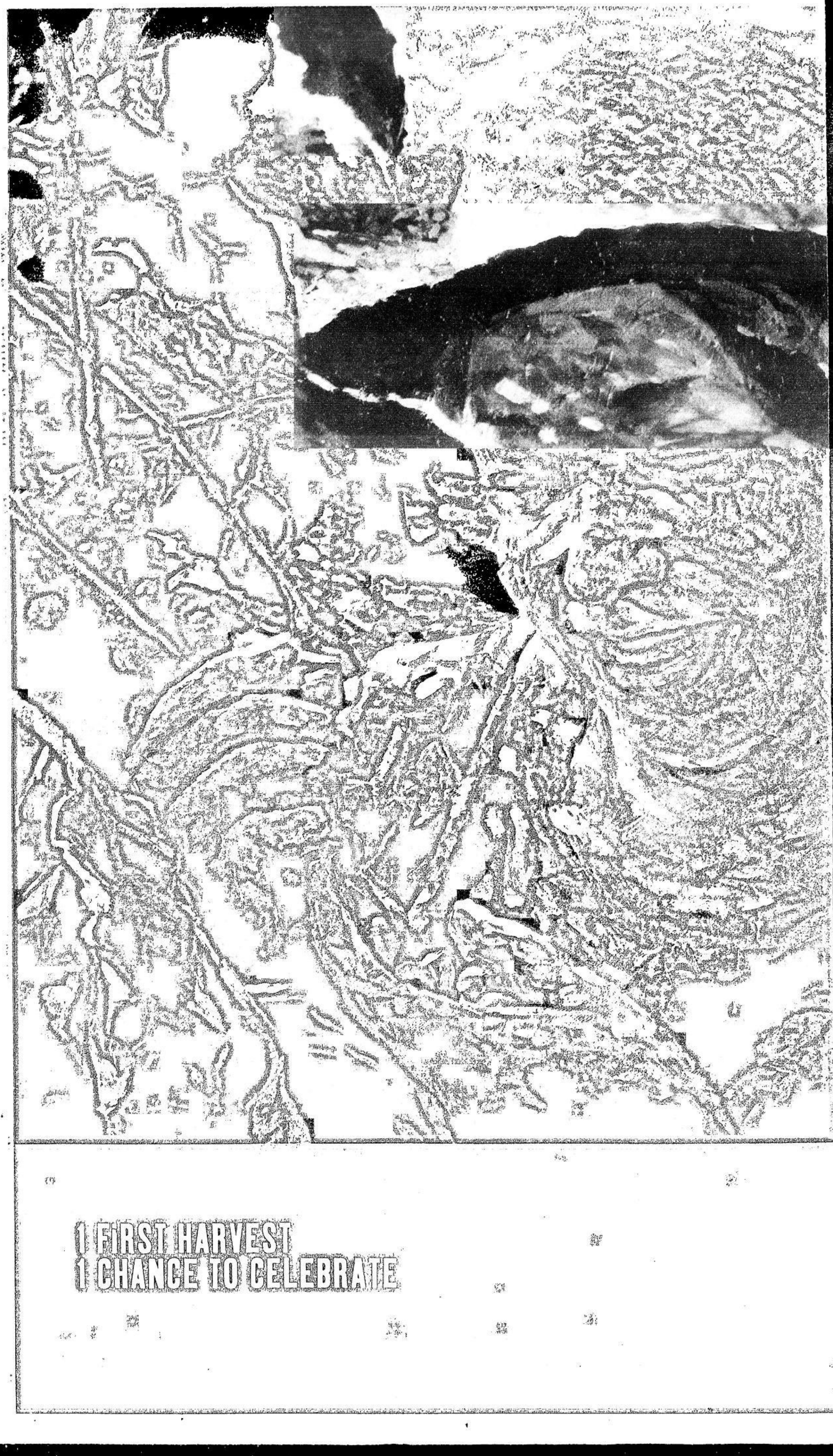

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OPINION

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Unstoppable

NOW, IT'S NO LONGER A MATTER OF SCIENTIFIC conjecture: global warming is a terrifying reality, and it is caused by humans. A report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change last week said global warming would be unstoppable for centuries to come.

The report said that global warming, caused mainly by fossil fuel pollution, would raise temperatures this century; worsen floods, droughts and hurricanes; melt polar ice; and damage the climate system for a thousand years to come. It warned of the possibility of famine and starvation due to food shortage, a severe lack of water and the inundation of coastal areas.

EDITORIALS

Now that the world knows what it faces in the near future, it has to take quick, concerted action. One move that could produce an immediate impact would be to exert moral suasion on the United States and Australia, two of the world's worst polluters, to ratify the Kyoto Protocol which gives emission targets to industrialized countries.

Last Saturday US President Bush publicly embraced the issue of climate change, but his administration remained reticent about taking any of the costly measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A Democratic administration might be expected to take a more assertive action, but does the world have to wait for 2008 for this to happen?

A trend that counts former US Vice President Al Gore, actor Leonardo DiCaprio and the London cabbies among its followers offers some promise of relief. It's the practice of making life "carbon neutral" by planting trees and undertaking other environmentally friendly efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions. Undertaken on a massive scale all over the world, it should produce some impressive results.

In our own small way, we can also do our part. The cartoon character Pogo many years ago said in connection with environmental pollution: "We've met the enemy, and it is us." It's time we seriously engaged the enemy, beginning by changing our pollutive and environmentally destructive ways.

Hurried

THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION HAS NOT ONLY committed a legally disputable act in sending an ambassador holding an ad interim appointment to the United Nations. It may also be violating diplomatic protocol and the unwritten rules of common courtesy, not to mention the rules of the foreign service.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was obviously in a hurry when she swore in retired Chief Justice Hilario Davide as ambassador to the United Nations although his appointment had been bypassed by the Commission on Appointments. Congress being in recess, he was given an ad interim appointment, and now he is being sent posthaste to New York. But what if the ad interim appointment is again bypassed—or worse, rejected—by the commission? Would this not embarrass the Philippines before the entire world that is represented in the United Nations?

In the hurry to install Davide in the UN, Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo has reportedly committed a faux pas. When he was at the UN recently, Romulo unexpectedly informed UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon that Davide is the new Philippine representative to the UN. A high-ranking Filipino official at the UN said such lobbying for the immediate recognition of Davide, even as Permanent Representative UN Lauro Baja remains there, was a faux pas.

Baja was recently elected vice president of the UN Economic and Social Council, one of the principal organs of the world body. The Philippines topped the election for 18 new members of the 54-member council. The Ecosoc victory marks the first time that the Philippines emerged No. 1 in an election to a major organ of the UN. It follows a similar impressive win three years ago when the Philippines was elected as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council. Baja also engineered the election of the Philippines to the Human Rights Council in 2005. With Baja as vice president of the Ecosoc, he is now in line to become president of the council when Asia's turn comes. But this possibility may remain just another dream if he is replaced now.

Baja has reportedly been given three weeks to vacate his position. This would violate the usual practice of giving ambassadors who are being replaced 60 days to relocate or return to the home office.

Baja has done a lot for the country. And now, this is his reward: to be given only three weeks to vacate his post.

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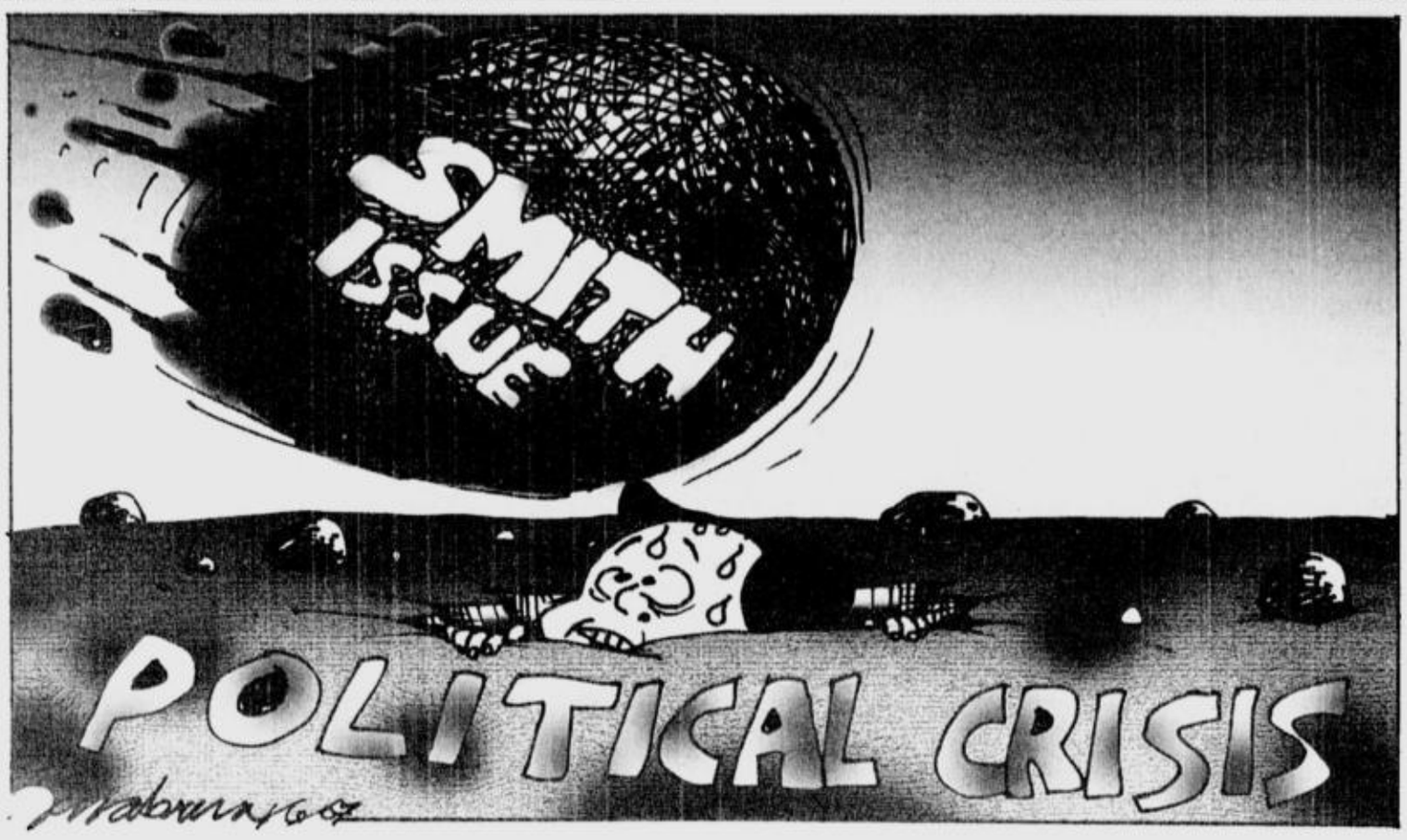

Washing filthy water

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

NEWSROOMS DUB THIS TYPE OF STORY AS *"de cajon,"* recycled reports that land on the evening news or the front page merely by altering names, dates, places and quotes. New data is shoved into old boxes.

Read the reports on diarrhea outbreaks in Loon, Bohol. Two person died while 186 fell ill. Lakshmi Legaspi of the Department of Health fingered polluted water.

Now, change the Bohol dateline to Pangasinan. Then, whittle the victims down from 186 to 81. Jack up the deaths to 24. Next, replace the Legaspi quote with one from then Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit. What emerges is an account of the July 2004 cholera-gastroenteritis outbreak in 25 Pangasinan towns.

Or paste the Bohol-Pangasinan details on Cebu. E-coli infected wells triggered gastroenteritis epidemics in Alcoy, Aloguinasan, Sogod and other towns. "In 17 of 53 municipalities and cities, more than 50 percent had unsafe water sources," the San Carlos University study "Cebu" notes. Today, one out of every four Cebuanos still drinks from dubious water sources.

"You cannot wash filthy water," an old Arab proverb says. And in 24 provinces, one of every five residents do just that in dank wells or easily polluted springs, according to the Philippine Human Development Report. These provinces are Sulu, Maguindanao, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan, Masbate, Zamboanga del Norte and Sur, Negros Oriental and Occidental, Sultan Kudarat, Palawan, Camarines Norte, Leyte, Misamis Occidental, Apayao, Quezon, North Cotabato, Bukidnon, Iloilo, Guimaras, Agusan del Sur, Nueva Vizcaya, Ilocos Norte and Benguet.

There's no substitute for water. When taps run dry, harvests fail and disease moves in. Annual "deaths from diarrhea were six times greater than average annual deaths from armed conflicts for the 1990s." *De cajon* reports, therefore, reveal an emerging water crisis that's exacting a toll many "leaders" ignore.

"Faced with mounting pressure on the world's freshwater resources ... the 21st century water governance challenge may prove to be among the most daunting faced in human history," asserts the UNDP report, "Beyond Scarcity: Power, Poverty and the Global Water Crisis."

"From the aqueducts of ancient Rome to the great public works of 19th century Europe and the United States ... the story of water management (has always) been one of human ingenuity and human frailty," the report says.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes waded into this problem by asserting that come 2010, this glossed-over problem could be a full-blown threat. Population growth has scrubbed gains in overall water supply. And for every Filipino, only 1,907 cubic meters of fresh water is available. "This makes us second to the lowest among Southeast Asian countries in fresh water availability," Reyes said.

The Burmese and Malaysians, in fact, have almost five times the water that we "hydrological indigents" hoard, the World Resources Institute notes. But even this late, some officials still wallow in the myth of water-wealth. Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña, for example, scoffs at warnings of water shortages even as his city overdraws 300,000 cubic meters per day from aquifers that can provide only 150,000 cubic meters.

The gloomy "Malthusian arithmetic" used by Reyes increasingly colors the debate on water. "But the scarcity at the heart of the global water crisis is rooted in power, poverty and inequality, not in physical availability," the same UN report says.

Water shortages result from public policies that limit people's access to water infrastructures. These include shoddy municipal water agencies. As a result, some families spend 12 percent of poverty threshold income to buy water, the UN report notes.

Rural folk, as in Loon, also are handcuffed to the twin burden of high poverty and low political influence. "They have little influence over institutional choices that shape decisions and set priorities for resource allocations (including water," says the report.

Due to the powers given by the Local Government Code, towns, provinces and cities have unprecedented increases in incomes. Many local officials zealously allocate honoraria for themselves, as in Dumaguete or Pinamungajan, Cebu. But few systematically apply these funds to critical needs like water wells. In some places, breakdown from lack of maintenance can run as high as 29 percent for hand pumps and 33 percent for bore holes.

"LGUs have not ... pursued their own development projects ... with build-operate-transfer agreements with the private sector," the Asian Development Bank notes in "Urbanization and Sustainability in Asia." Yet, investments in clean water pay. The incidence of water-borne diseases fell by half, in five years, after construction of deep wells, some studies show.

Atrophied official mind-sets also ignore "the social minimum" of human rights. This means all citizens should get resources sufficient to meet basic needs and live dignified lives.

That right is quantifiable in some instances. With regard to water, it means 20 liters of clean water every day per person. This is not an optional extra, abandoned on whim by individuals or governments. It is a binding obligation that stems from man's dignity and entails responsibilities.

Premature graves "may be the most disturbing products of the water and sanitation deficit," the UN report adds. And from Argentina's Mar del Plata in 1977, Dublin in 1992, to Kyoto in 1997, all global conferences warned of conflicts if water and sanitation reforms are again sidetracked.

"It is a grave moral shortcoming if people cannot drink water without courting disease or death," Sandra Postel writes in "The Last Oasis."

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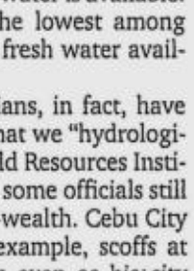
There oughta be a law

THERE'S THE RUB



Conrado de Quiros

I ALWAYS MAKE OUT IN TALKS, WHENEVER a question about corruption is raised, that there's a fundamental difference between our corruption and that of other Asian countries. It's not that ours is bigger. Other Asian countries, or closer to home, Southeast Asian ones, have more astronomical levels of corruption. Transparency International lists Ferdinand Marcos only second among the all-time crooks of Asia. The dubious honor of being first belongs to Indonesia's Suharto. Marcos stole "only" $15 billion, Suharto stole $35 billion.

But you look at Indonesia and the Philippines today, and you are going to weep only for the Philippines. Indonesia hasn't quite reached such levels of desperation that it has to export its people wholesale to survive. That's not simply explained by the fact that Indonesia is bigger and richer and can tolerate higher levels of pillage.

Quite simply, though Suharto stole more, he never took the money out of Indonesia. He plunked his loot in all sorts of businesses there, big and small, multimillion and penny-ante. Marcos stashed his loot abroad, in Swiss and other banks. At the end of the day, Suharto remained in Indonesia, ready to face, or buy off, his detractors. At the end of the day, Marcos fled to Hawaii to enjoy the bitter fruit of his murderous labor, such as he could with lupus and Imelda, whichever made living more unbearable.

That is the difference between corruption here and other Asian countries, which explains the abject state we're in. Other Asian countries at least have patriotic crooks; we have treacherous ones. The blood money of other Asian tyrants go on to employ the citizens of their country; the blood money of local ones go on to employ only a few Filipino maids and chauffeurs in America.

That was the first thing I thought of when I read about this business of Mike Arroyo signing a waiver allowing the HypoVereinsbank in Munich to divulge his accounts, if any, to the ethics committee of the House of Representatives. He did this to counter Alan Peter Cayetano's allegations that he held accounts there and apparently to comply with the lawmaker's demand for him to sign a waiver to ascertain it. Cayetano is unimpressed by the gesture and says that is not exactly, or entirely, what he is asking for. What he is asking for is a waiver that will free not just this particular bank in Munich but all foreign banks to reveal the First Gentleman's deposits upon request by Philippine authorities. What he was trying to determine, Cayetano said, was whether there existed "a pattern of corruption and money-laundering by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and members of the First Family."

I leave others to debate the question of who has scored the more points in this latest round of the ongoing bout between Arroyo and Cayetano. My point is simply this: Why should signing a waiver allowing foreign banks to disclose the deposits of Filipino public officials—and their families—upon request of Philippine authorities be voluntary or optional? Why should it be done out of the goodness of one's heart? Why shouldn't it be compulsory or a requisite of public office? Why shouldn't that be something candidates explicitly or implicitly agree to when they run for any position in this country, from barangay councilor to president?

Frankly, I don't know why no representative or senator has yet filed that as an urgent bill. Henceforth, every Filipino official, elected or appointed, agrees to have his assets abroad scrutinized without legal impediment from him. Or more to the point, henceforth every Filipino official, elected or appointed, agrees to waive his right to secrecy in bank deposits abroad. That should be written in the oath of office public officials must swear to before they occupy their positions. Which, of course, should apply to the members of their immediate families as well. For obvious reasons: A public official's loot may not be laundered by his or her spouse or children.

The logic is simple: At the very least, even if those deposits are well-gotten (although the notion that Filipino officials could possibly harbor legitimate wealth in Swiss and other banks is about as believable as the notion of military intelligence or GMA's capacity for honesty), what is a Filipino public official doing not using that money to improve the lot of those he professes to serve? At the very most, if those deposits are ill-gotten—which they almost axiomatically are, notably where they carry the name "Jose Pidal" or variations thereof—then their depositors should be shot by firing squad in, well, not in Bagumbayan, that would be sacrilege. Those deposits do not just represent corruption, they represent treason. Those deposits do not just represent a betrayal of public trust, they represent a betrayal of the nation.

We have a proposed anti-terror bill that proposes to terrorize the citizens by freezing the bank deposits of suspected terrorists. Why can't we have a saner anti-corruption and anti-treason bill that simply obliges public officials to disclose their deposits in foreign banks by waiving their right to secrecy there? What can be more a matter of national security than preventing the remaining wealth of this already much ransacked country from being smuggled outside and frittered away by crooked traitors or treacherous crooks? What can be higher treason than plucking food from the mouth of the hungry to bet on Pacquiao's fights? What can be a worse act of terrorism than planting a bomb at the heart of this country's survival?

Will Mike Arroyo sign a waiver allowing all foreign banks to disclose any deposits he might have made with them? That shouldn't be a matter of choice, that should be a matter of course. By God, by law and by golly.

Black eye for government and AFP

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

OBVIOUSLY, MARINE MAJ. GEN. BEN DOLORFINO has assimilated Muslim culture so much that he feels very much at home with dissident forces, such as the Moro National Liberation Front. Reports say he goes in and out of the MNLF camp in Panamao, Sulu, and thus he may have seen nothing wrong in discussing irritants with its leaders, right in that camp. Doubtless he was able to convince the peace panel it was okay to do so.

But the government people should have realized that in so doing, they were risking not only their personal security, but also the reputation of the government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines that Dolorfino represents. We still don't know the whole story, but their visit presented a great temptation for hostage-taking considering that MNLF chair Nur Misuari remains under detention. That their group was taken hostage by the MNLF was an act of colossal stupidity on their part—and a huge black eye to the government and the AFP.

* * *

Sources in the League of Governors are amazed at how President Macapagal-Arroyo was able to stretch her patience and listen painstakingly to the gripes of the governors at the dinner-meeting she hosted for them at Malacañang last Friday. Sixty governors showed up in what turned out to be a very frank and candid exchange. Some noted that GMA left the dining room three times and returned within minutes, and they surmised that it was her way of holding her temper in front of her staunchest allies, especially now that elections are approaching. Local Government Secretary Ronaldo Puno sent a subordinate to the meeting, but GMA ordered Puno summoned, so he could listen to the local executives' gripes and answer them himself. A source said Puno was red as a beet but meek as a lamb.

* * *

Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson began by saying that the governors felt GMA had been neglecting them. That raised her eyebrows and colleagues sought to mitigate his opening salvo by saying it was her officials' actions they were objecting to. Batangas Gov. Armand Sanchez tearfully recounted how he was unjustly removed from office. The Western Visayan governors took up the cudgels for Iloilo Gov. Neil Tupas and protested the manner of the police "raid" on the Capitol. Antique Gov. Salvacion Perez, who chairs the Region VI RDC, said they realized that GMA was presiding over the Asean Summit at the time of the "executions" and that she didn't know anything about it. Another local official chimed in and said the governors didn't relish the idea of campaigning for former opposition Senators Tito Sotto and Teresa Oreta. GMA noted that Pia Cayetano went against her even though the ruling coalition had given her a break, whereas Miriam Defensor Santiago proved to be a big help to her.

The long session ended with GMA promising to attend to their problems and giving assurance that no move against any local official would be done without consulting ULAP. In turn, the governors promised to continue supporting her administration.

* * *

If the President was able to meet with many leaders of industry and finance during the recent Davos Forum in Switzerland, it was in large part due to the excellent networking abroad by her officials, including former Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo, who has served as pro bono senior adviser on international competitiveness. That job was Romulo's last official act, since he was recently appointed to the board of counselors of Kissinger McLarty Associates (KMA). He has informed GMA that he can no longer continue due to potential conflict of interest, but he pledged to keep helping her administration, particularly in promoting private foreign investments.

KMA, chaired by former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, counsels corporations on **strategic planning, market access, mergers and acquisitions, corporate communications, and political and risk issues worldwide. Kissinger said Romulo was a "respected and effective diplomat" and would be of immense help to KMA in understanding events and challenges around the world, especially in the most dynamic region of Asia.**

* * *

I'm glad Mon Farolan wrote on Vice President Noli de Castro's clarification about the use of credit cards for senior citizens' purchase of medicines. De Castro was the main author of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2003, and his explanation is timely as some senior citizens such as INQUIRER readers Carlos Manalastas and Jorge Reyes have complained that drug stores refuse to accept credit cards in paying for their medicines. De Castro said that both the law and its implementing rules and regulations, as embodied in DOH Administrative Order 177, Series of 2004, guarantee that senior citizens can avail themselves of medicines at discounted prices "regardless of the manner of payment." He stressed that the refusal by drug outlets to accept credit cards constitutes a violation of the law, which is punishable with both fine and imprisonment.

* * *

Recently I tried to purchase discounted medicines with my credit card at the Mercury Drug branch in Market! Market! but the staff refused to accept it. Branch manager Mar Calalo said he hadn't received a policy memo yet from the head office on the use of credit cards. I was forced to go to an ATM to withdraw cash. Luckily I had a car. But what about seniors who don't have transportation, or who are caught in some emergency but who only have a credit card with them.

INQUIRER reader Reyes suggested that De Castro espouse the cause of seniors on this issue aside from telling them to report violations to the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs or to the mayors or the Department of Justice. This is an excellent suggestion. A test case should be filed against the country's biggest drug chain, which has refused to comply with the law.

Pass the RE Bill now!

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I FIRST READ OF THE MALDIVES AS THE "IN" honeymoon destination for couples in search of new places to drag their fatigued asses to after a kick-ass wedding. Baguio is so old hat, and Amanpulo has become much too common, so the Maldives—a cluster of islands and reef atolls in the Indian Ocean—has become the place to go to for those who hanker to impress the folks back home.

But a report in yesterday's foreign news section says President Maumoon Abdul Gayoom has warned that the Maldives may be no more if the trend of rising sea levels due to global warming continues.

A United Nations climate panel forecasts that world sea levels are likely to rise by almost two feet (23.2 inches) by 2100 due to global warming. With the average height of islands in the Maldives at 1.5 meters (about three-and-half feet) above mean sea level, Maumoon said "it would take a couple of centuries at the most to totally inundate the entire Maldives."

The picture I have in my mind right now is an afternoon I spent with some friends on a sandbar off the coast of Lucap, in Alaminos, Pangasinan, near the Hundred Islands. We were all still in our teens, and content with just running around the sandbar as the sun met the horizon, trying to outrace the tides as they "ate up" the sands. We had a boat and a boatman on standby to take us home, but if such a thing were to happen to the people of the Maldives, will they have enough boats to ferry them to safety? And will the boats come on time?

* * *

WE do not live in the Maldives, but that doesn't mean we don't need to worry about climate change. Manila and environs, for one, are below sea level, and floods have not only been a perennial seasonal inconvenience, they are occurring even in higher elevations, and the floodwater levels have been rising.

And there is much more to worry about than floodwaters or rising sea levels. The chilly climate we are "enjoying" right now comes with a caveat, as we are told to savor the cool weather as much we can because the coming summer will be many times hotter and more humid than in the past. And of course, we have all felt the brunt of typhoons and other weather disturbances that have occurred not just unseasonably late but with greater ferocity and more tragic consequences. All these scientists lay at the door of climate change, and at the widespread, reckless us of carbon-based gases over the last few years that has led to the warming of the earth's surface temperature.

Yesterday, Greenpeace hurled a challenge to the Philippine government, particularly the Senate, to pass the Renewable Energy Bill, urging the body to "not deliberately pass up the last chance to enact into law a policy intended to mitigate climate change impacts at the source."

Calling it an "11th hour challenge," Greenpeace's appeal comes as the Philippine government is poised to "drop" the RE Bill at the end of the 13th Congress this week, despite assurances from President Macapagal-Arroyo that the country will "march with the world in the struggle against global warming."

Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigns director Von Hernandez warns lawmakers that "this is no longer the time for rhetoric but for urgent action. If the government were really serious about confronting climate change, they should have prioritized the passage of the RE bill long ago. How can the President speak of meeting the challenge of climate change when there are no mechanisms in place specifically to back up this action? Worse, the government continues to invest in dirty energy projects."

* * *

GREENPEACE has been challenging the Philippine government to take immediate action to mitigate climate change impacts by enacting the RE Bill. Climate change impacts have been manifested in the country in devastating storms, floods, extreme precipitation and droughts, leading to calamities which have destroyed lives and property, and have crippled an already struggling economy.

Last Friday, a new United Nations report detailed the strongest warnings yet from the international scientific community on the threat of dangerous climate change.

The latest report on the science of climate change from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) meeting in Paris concludes that continuing business-as-usual practices globally is likely to increase the earth's average temperature between 1.1 degrees Celsius and 6.4 degrees Celsius above 1980 to 1999 levels by 2095. Among the major findings is the statement that the intensity of tropical storms is likely to increase in the coming years.

* * *

THE PHILIPPINES has been bearing the brunt of climate change impacts for more than a decade. The Greenpeace report "Crisis or Opportunity: Climate Change Impacts" details trends in extreme weather events in the country which validated earlier IPCC assessments that climate change has and will be manifested in "changes in frequency, intensity and duration of extreme [weather] events."

The most recent calamity from extreme weather events to hit the country was the series of strong typhoons toward the end of 2006 which inflicted major damage to lives and the economy.

"President Arroyo has stated that the reduction of carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions is part of the government's long-term agenda to address this impending disaster. Action, however, has to start now if we are truly committed to this goal. The RE Bill must be passed and strengthened with legally-binding targets to reflect our sincere determined response to last Friday's dire warnings. Alongside this, the government must halt the expansion of coal energy, one of the world's major climate change culprits," said Hernandez.

Is Bush right?

WORLD VIEW

Ian Bremmer

WHATEVER CRITICS AT HOME AND ABROAD may think, the "surge" that President Bush is planning for Iraq is more than a troop increase; it is a new and high-risk regional strategy. True, Bush's plan will prove far too little and comes far too late to stabilize Iraq. But it does offer the United States some longer-term benefits in the regional battle with Iran for influence.

At the heart of the new strategy is Bush's decision to take the fight directly to Iraq's most powerful militia, the Mahdi Army. Under the nominal control of the militant cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, the group has become Iraq's largest and best-armed fighting force and is pursuing its own political and security agenda.

The Mahdi Army has exchanged fire with US troops before. Those confrontations ended with a truce of sorts, though skirmishes have continued, because US forces have been reluctant to fight Sunni insurgents and Shi'a militiamen at the same time.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki has also been reluctant to take on the Mahdi Army, mainly because the support of Sadr loyalists in Iraq's parliament is crucial for his political survival. Now, instead of waiting for Maliki to act, US forces appear poised to do the job themselves.

If they can significantly degrade the militia's strength, or at least contain its influence within Baghdad's Shi'a slums, the Iraqi government will have a somewhat better chance of developing a credible security force and Bush can claim some success. At the very least, the new strategy recognizes that the gravest challenge to stability in the near term comes from militia groups in general and the Mahdi Army in particular.

Then there is the broader and growing conflict with Iran. Recent official US rhetoric and actions on the ground, including the arrest of five Iranians in Irbil in early January and Bush's authorization of deadly force against Iranians who threaten Iraqi security or US troops, reflect a much more confrontational approach. But it also indicates recognition that Iran's effort to extend its regional influence poses the single biggest challenge to the Middle East's long-term stability.

To be sure, Bush's new strategy is highly unlikely to help Iraqis avert a slide into sectarian civil war. A temporary 16 percent boost in troops simply is not enough to get that job done. Bush insists that there will soon be enough US troops in central Iraq to "hold" areas seized from militia groups and insurgents. But for how long? American troops will eventually leave Iraq, and all the relevant parties—the Maliki government, Shi'a militias, Sunni insurgents, Iran, and Iraq's Sunni Arab neighbors—know it. Sadr can simply hold back and wait the Americans out.

Moreover, any viable solution in Iraq requires political agreement among Iraqis, which in turn will depend on their willingness to compromise. Laws guaranteeing a fair division of Iraqi oil profits must be drafted, and all factions must have confidence that what is agreed will be enforced. Sunnis must be persuaded that neither their minority status nor former membership in Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party will exclude them from political and economic life.

But Sunnis and Shi'a are now killing one another in increasing numbers, and the new aggressiveness of US forces will make compromise all but impossible. It is unrealistic to expect Iraqi politicians to make substantial political sacrifices while their constituents are fighting Americans and one another.

Finally, Bush's strategy already faces challenges at home. Few Americans—and therefore few US lawmakers—have much confidence in Bush's leadership on Iraq. If the new strategy fails to produce positive and tangible results within a few months, the steady domestic drumbeat for troop withdrawals will become deafening. A sharp spike in US casualties would compound the pressure to get out.

Even so, the new strategy has some benefits. First, it sidelines Maliki, which means that he will be less damaged politically than if he were directly identified with US attacks on Iraqi Shi'a. US actions will spark Iraqi criticism that Maliki is impotent or an American puppet, but those charges have already been made. Nothing could be worse for Maliki than explicit authorization for attacks on Shi'a militias, and the near-term survival of his government is crucial if any progress is to be made on the political challenges facing all of Iraq's factions.

Second, the new strategy will keep the Mahdi Army on its heels. Sadr's militia threatens to quickly become Iraq's answer to Hezbollah: a well-armed, politically connected private army with its own foreign policy. The more that US forces can degrade the Mahdi Army's position and force Sadr into face-saving political moves, the weaker the militia will be relative to other forces in Iraq after US troops head home.

Finally, taking the fight directly to Iraq's most powerful Shi'a militia and Iranians inside Iraq will align the US much more closely with its traditional Sunni Arab allies—Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf states. Arab governments have been especially angry over the chaos in Iraq, fearing that the US will abandon the Sunni minority to the not-so-tender mercies of revenge-minded Shi'a and expressing growing anxiety that the war has empowered Iran to extend Shi'a influence throughout the Middle East.

When Iraq falls apart, as now appears all but inevitable, the US will need as many friends in the region as it can get, particularly as the battle with Iran for regional influence and the conflict over its nuclear program intensifies. If nothing else, having a common enemy will help the US and its Arab allies restore damaged ties. ***Project Syndicate***

Ian Bremmer is president of Eurasia Group, the global political risk consultancy.

Sent away

YOUNG BLOOD

Grace Ann Arce

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

I HAVE A VERY STRICT FATHER. HE HAS ONE INFLEXIBLE rule (which I think no teenager can follow): No boyfriend until graduation from college and even then, he must be earning at least a six-figure salary monthly.

His strictness has really affected my social life. I can't answer a phone call from a guy without being subjected to a 10-minute interrogation by him afterward. I cannot go out with my friends without a chaperon, or attend a party alone.

However, it didn't stop me from having a boyfriend—until one day my sister found out and told my father about it.

Because of this forbidden love, I was sent all the way to Europe. I didn't want to go, I didn't want to leave my guy, but who do you think will win in a battle between a father and his 18-year-old daughter?

My first stop was Vienna, Austria, where three of my father's sisters live. I stayed with an aunt who was running an art gallery and she urged me to discover the world of artists. I enjoyed her company because she brought me to some places in Europe where her painters' works were being exhibited. We also went shopping for branded clothes at lower prices in different places like Brussels, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy and Austria. Because of the language barrier, I had a very hard time communicating with people in the malls, fast-food outlets or parks. Even my cousins could barely speak English.

In Manila, my dad let me drive a car and so I had no experience commuting. The first train ride I took was in Vienna. I felt physically and mentally comfortable riding on the train, knowing I was not in Manila. I told myself this was rich Europe, where there would be only a few snatchers, kidnappers, murderers or rapists.

I was wrong. On my very first trip on train, I was robbed. And I didn't notice it because I was wearing a very thick trench coat. I lost my perfume, my makeup kit and my wallet with my license, IDs, credit cards and pocket money. That led me to the conclusion that there could always be a bad man in every room in this world and it made me very cautious.

When my Schengen visa was about to expire, my aunts convinced me to stay on as a TNT or *tago nang tago* (an illegal alien) and try to find and marry a very rich guy who was about to die. They didn't want me to go back to Manila because they were also my father's victims as regards this boyfriend thing. But I told them marriage was not yet in my vocabulary. I also wanted to stay in London for some months to ponder my future.

I won the battle this time. So off I went to London, but I was still under my father's shadow: I had to stay with another aunt and her diplomat-husband.

Their family was completely different from what I had thought a diplomat's family would be. With my uncle going to office every day and my aunt keeping house and raising their son who was in first grade. They didn't have any house help. Everyone helped with the everyday chores. And since I was living with them, I was assigned to do the dishes, the one thing I've always hated doing in our own house.

Since I was already in the city, my father insisted that I enroll in a short course in a college in Central London. So on weekends, my aunt and I toured around the country, while on weekdays I attend classes.

I got very depressed, perhaps because of the season or the different culture. All I wanted was to go home, but father wouldn't hear of it.

One night, as I was surfing the Net, I came across the website of a Filipino community in London. I learned that they had scheduled a gathering.

For the first time, I rode on a bus with another Filipina (Filipinos have a certain aura you can easily notice when they are abroad) and when we got off at the same station, I knew she was going to the same gathering.

When I arrived, all eyes were on me. Someone asked me to go on stage and introduce myself. Later I got to meet the heroes of our country, most of them nurses or house help. I learned that they would meet about twice a month just for *"kumustahan"* (saying hello). They were like best friends, and they helped you all the way.

In one of our meetings, they found out that I sang rather well. They immediately asked me to help organize a choral group for teenagers so they would become more active in community affairs instead of drinking like their peers did. Although I am not a musician, I drew on my experience as a member of our church choir back home and shared with them everything I knew about music.

The months went so fast and before winter was over I had to decide whether to stay or go home. I began asking myself what was God's real purpose in putting me there. Once I glanced at the organ and looked at the choir and concluded that they were the reason. But I had finished the things I had to do, and it was time to go.

I booked a flight home without telling my family. I wanted my return to be a surprise. I told the travel agent not to tell anyone about my trip home.

But as soon as our plane landed, I heard my phone beeping (I had forgotten to turn it off). There was a text message from my sister welcoming me home. A cousin had told my sister I was going home? So much for a surprise homecoming.

When I got out of the airport, the first familiar face I saw was that of a guy with a great smile on his face, the love of my life. I thought he was taking me home, until I saw my sister.

Back in our house, I kissed and hugged my parents. My father tried to hold back his tears even as he held me close to him.

I had barely started opening my bags of *pasalubong* while recounting my experiences when I noticed that they were not even listening. They were watching their favorite telenovela. Hello! I just arrived from abroad!

In this chapter of my life, I really hated my father. But I realize he only wanted the best for me, even if what he thought to be best for me cost him a lot of money as well as my long absence. Still my trip gave me the opportunity to experience a little more freedom, to meet real people and learn from their stories. I learned how to travel alone, deal with people of different cultures, appreciate nature, wash dishes and share the talent that was given to me. And for all that, I thank him.

Grace Ann Arce, 20, is a second year AB Mass Communication student at Our Lord's Grace Montessori School and Colleges.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

Politics and water crisis

I'M A FOREIGNER WHO HAS BEEN STAYing in the Philippines for the past 17 years. As a water treatment engineer, I too have often wondered how Metro Manila is going to stem the oncoming water crisis that Cruz warned about. (INQUIRER, 2/2/07)

I have been involved in large-scale Reverse Osmosis Plants since the early 1980s. I can say that even those with the most efficient designs still operate at around $0.75 per cubic meter. Add to this the margins for distribution and profits, and you will end up with a tap price of around $1.30-$1.50 per cubic meter. That's P70 at the current exchange rates and could quickly become a hot issue.

Unlike other commodities that can be traded according to market forces, water is a basic necessity; it must be made available to all, rich and poor alike.

Desalination makes perfect sense in some places, especially in countries with no available, natural, sweet water resources. But the cure for the water shortage here lies elsewhere—in conservation and recycling.

The dual pipe system that Cruz mentioned is not new. Before George W. Bush and his hooligans "rescued" the Iraqis and bombed everything to smithereens, every house there had two service connections—a small pipe connected to the faucets, for potable water; and a larger one that supplied clarified water from the rivers, which was used for flushing toilets, washing clothes and watering lawns.

The problem with recycling is that it needs a substantial, coherent infrastructure that brings the water to sewage treatment plants. Here, basically all the sewage either seeps into the ground, raising the nitrate and coliform bacteria levels in the groundwater to dizzy heights, or ends up in Manila Bay. Cairo was a city like that, with a pollution plume so big it extended into the Mediterranean Sea and could be seen on satellite images. Then in the late '80s, the Egyptian government, with a Herculean effort over several years, connected every house in Cairo to a sewage system, which delivered waste water to several huge treatment plants. The result: No more pollution of the beaches, no more nitrate enrichment of the ground water, no more bio-hazard and plenty of treated water for irrigation purposes.

Singapore applies membrane filtration technology to successfully re-use waste water, even as potable water. But here's the catch: Such projects have a long gestation period and require foresight, political will and dedication to the needs of the country. Our "tongressmen" here would never endorse a project that would show benefits only after several years. So, we continue in vain to try to fix long-term problems with quick-fix solutions.

The Philippines is one among the top 10 countries in annual rainfall. Yet it cannot assure its citizens adequate water supply in the very near future; it never will for as long as it is run by a bunch of self-centered, self-serving crooks masquerading as public servants.

—ULRICH BOSSE,
28 Judith St.,
Vermont Royale Executive Village,
Bo. Mayamot, Antipolo 1820 Rizal

What 'silent majority' for Smith?

I DON'T KNOW WHAT JENNIFER Dimayuga meant about the "silent majority who actually thinks [Lance Cpl. Daniel] Smith is innocent," and how she could give us readers a factual accounting of such a claim. (INQUIRER, 1/26/07)

Nevertheless, I do not belong to her so-called "silent majority." I am not influenced by the Left or what the activists are saying. I believe that rape is a human rights violation. Going to bars and getting drunk senseless do not make one fair game for rape. I wonder what influenced Dimayuga to adopt that line of thinking.

Smith is a rapist and he should serve his sentence in a Philippine jail.

—ARLENE ESPERIDA,
mailboxae@yahoo.com, Tokyo, Japan

IF you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and photos by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to Nos. 897-4793, 897-4794, or e-mail readersadvocate@ inquirer.com.ph

Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Meloto for president

EARLY THIS YEAR, I FLOATED ON SOME Yahoo groups the idea of convincing Tony Meloto to run for the presidency come 2010. Nobody really took it seriously. Most of the responses were to leave Tony Meloto alone. With the INQUIRER naming Tony Meloto as Man of the Year, I am more convinced that his kind of leadership is what our country needs.

Outside Manny Pacquiao, he is the only person who can unite us as a people. He can talk to the elite and he speaks the language of the masses. Politicians of whatever political color would surely want a photo op with him.

Meloto has perfected the Gawad Kalinga template. If only he could apply this template to our nation. GK777 will have its completion on year 2010. Just in time to start leading and guiding our nation.

—PINOY NAVARRO,
iraya36@yahoo.com

Cheers for special report on autism

FILIPINOS WITH ASD (AUTISM SPECtrum disorder) are no longer "invisible people." Thanks to the recent media focus on autism.

In particular, we would like to commend the INQUIRER'S special report on autism, which was run in time with the recent 11th National Autism Consciousness Week. Families and professionals dealing with autism cheered the comprehensive I-Team report, which enlightened readers about the condition, the situation and the needs of our special children.

Yes, "much more has to be done." Slowly maybe, but steadily.

—DANG UY-KOE
president,
Autism Society Philippines,
dangkoe@skyinet.net

Meloto not founder of Gawad Kalinga

IN THE INQUIRER EDITORIAL OF JAN. 31, titled "Solidarity," Tony Meloto was referred to as the founder of Gawad Kalinga. This simply is untrue. Meloto is the executive director and not the founder of Gawad Kalinga.

Gawad Kalinga is the social arm of the Couples for Christ. Nowhere did the INQUIRER mention the Couples for Christ in the editorial. It is unfair to the millions of members of the Couples for Christ, both in the Philippines and in the diaspora, that their hard work is credited to only one man and not to them. Gawad Kalinga is the fruit of their "bayanihan" spirit, and all honor and glory belongs to God alone.

A correction is long overdue.

—SANDRA SOTTO,
New York City,
hammy@nyc.rr.com

Judge clarifies court record on poaching cases

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO THE NEWS item titled "Judge also releases boat with turtles" (INQUIRER, 1/13/07) Court records show that on June 20, 2006, eight Chinese nationals were charged before this court with illegal fishing. The prosecutor's office recommended bail in the amount of P30,000 for each accused. The vessel King King Hai was placed under the temporary custody of the apprehending team. Each of the accused posted a cash bond. Contrary to the claim of Angelique Songco, manager of the Tubbataha Marine Office, I did not order the release of the stuffed turtles and the fishing boat. According to Mario Basaya of the BFAR, the stuffed turtles were turned over by the Philippine Coast Guard to the Palawan Committee on Sustainable Development (PCSD), for storage and safekeeping.

Records further show that on Jan. 3, 2007, after hearing, the court released the King King Hai to the temporary custody of its owner's authorized representative, because the vessel was reportedly not being properly maintained. The release order was conditioned upon the presentation of the authentic copy of the proof of ownership of the vessel and of a written undertaking to present the ship when so demanded by the court; and the posting of P50,000 cash bond. This order is the subject of a motion for reconsideration by the government prosecutor. The motion is being heard as of this writing while the vessel remains in the custody of the Philippine Naval Force West, Palawan.

Another case for poaching was filed on Dec. 31, 2006 before this same court, this time against 30 Chinese nationals. The bail recommended by the government prosecutor was P30,000 for each of the accused. The 30 Chinese nationals posted cash bonds for their temporary liberty and all of them are yet to be arraigned. MV Hoi Wan, its fishing gadgets, paraphernalia and equipment and the alleged catch were placed under the temporary custody of the provincial government of Palawan.

The claim that "for several years not a single poacher has ever served time" is most unfair. Since I became the presiding judge of the environment court here some three years ago, almost 100 percent of those accused of poaching were either fined $100,000, the penalty imposed by law, or sentenced to more than six years in jail for possession of noxious substance. In fact, I have sent 17 Chinese poachers to Iwahig Prison and Penal Farm in Palawan. Moreover, confiscated vessels have been forfeited in favor of the government.

The records of all these cases are open and accessible to any interested party, including journalists. I can assure the public that I act on all cases involving violations of environmental laws brought to me, on the basis of the facts and the laws, in the best light with which I see them, and in good faith.

—TORIBIO E. ILAO JR.,
RTC Branch, Justice Hall,
Sta. Monica Heights,
Puerta Princesa City, Palawan

I have a copy of a court order, dated Jan. 3, 2007, issued by Judge Ilao, ordering the release of the boat, FV King King Hai, to its legal owner or authorized representative. The stuffed turtles were turned over to the PCSD not because of him. And the question still is: Who let the 30 Chinese accused of poaching in Philippine waters step out of prison?

—MARLON RAMOS,
correspondent,
Inquirer Southern Luzon Bureau

AN OPEN LETTER TO THE ISM STAKEHOLDERS INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL MANILA COMMUNITY

Regarding Amendments to the Articles of Incorporation and By-Laws of International School Manila:

It is not true that the Amendments to the Articles are a requirement for accreditation. These are two totally different things. The school's articles have nothing to do with accreditation. WASC (Western Association of Schools & Colleges) will only accredit the school based on the goals the school has set out for itself. In the past we have always been accredited using our existing articles.

Unless International School absolutely requires it immediately, WE SHOULD LEAVE IT TO A DULY ELECTED BOARD TO MAKE MAJOR CHANGES IN OUR BY-LAWS. Further studies on these changes can only help. IF THE PROPOSAL IS TRULY A WISE MOVE IT CAN ONLY GAIN MORE SUPPORT.

Understandably the Interim Board is still hyped up over last September's events. We should wait for things to calm down. THINK THINGS THROUGH OBJECTIVELY. STUDY ITS POSSIBLE IMPACT. More so since it seeks to shift more powers to the position of the Superintendent, the present occupant of which is a controversial person under whose watch a politicized faculty supporting him staged a walkout, disrupting classes for two days.

Here are some key points that transpired during David Toze's management:

A) Questionable financial transactions as seen in the Memorandum on the Review of the Existing System of Internal Accounting Control, Administrative Efficiency and other matters June 30, 2005. Examples of these transactions are as follows:

1.1.7 Unrecorded bank credits = Php 927,866.22

1.2.2 Credit card collections of $137,357.16

1.3.1 Unsupported adjustments made amounting to Php 22,873,478.32

Please demand a copy of this Memorandum and see it for yourself.

B) Harassment of targeted teachers and employers.

C) Illegal dismissals of employees of which the settlement costs have been and will be shouldered by us.

D) All these governance issued have impacted the quality of our children's education. To site one example, the 30 minute - 1 hour allotted daily tutorial time for middle school was removed in 2005. As a direct effect many parents have had to resort to hiring personal tutors the cost of which is an average of 1,000pesos/hr.

LET THIS BE A CALL TO PARENTS TO BE MORE VIGILANT AND ACTIVE. IF YOU HAVE GIVEN YOUR PROXY, PULL THEM OUT FROM THE BOARD OFFICE BEFORE WEDNESDAY 6PM AND ABSTAIN.

DO NOT BE RUSHED.

ISM Concerned Parents

PAID ADVT

Bitter Marines-MNLF feud triggered detention

By Fe Zamora

JOLO, SULU—A BITTER FEUD between the Moro National Liberation Front and the Philippine Marines over an encounter on Jan. 18 triggered the detention of a Marine general and 20 other people in an MNLF camp in Sulu, the INQUIRER has learned.

The MNLF claimed the January clash was a "misencounter," saying that among the guerrillas killed in that incident was MNLF Kumander Kadam.

But military reports also said that among the wounded survivors in the gun battle was a rebel who had been positively identified as a follower of Joreem, an Abu Sayyaf Group sub-commander under ASG leader Radulan Sahiron.

Marine Brig. Gen. Juancho Sabban maintained it was a legitimate encounter between the Marines and the Abu Satyyaf.

"We even lost three good Marines," he said.

MNLF leader Ustadz Habier Malik insisted it was misencounter between Marines and the MNLF, with whom the government had signed a peace deal.

Three days after the Jan. 18 encounter, Malik sent his chief of staff, Briao, to a meeting with Sabban to discuss the matter.

The meeting, held at the Marines resort camp in Buhanginan, Patikul, was also attended by Brig. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino and Undersecretary Ramon Santos, the leaders of the government team detained by the MNLF last weekend.

Sabban said that at that meeting, they presented the Abu Sayyaf survivor captured during the firefight.

"The findings were that there was collusion between the MNLF and the Abu Sayyaf at the lower level," Sabban said.

Marine battalion commander Lt. Col. Mel Odiales Jr. said Patikul, the area where the encounter took place, was not an MNLF territory, as defined under the peace agreement.

"Patikul is an Abu Sayyaf territory," Odiales said, adding that only Panamao and Indanan had been declared as MNLF areas.

Patikul is known as the territory of Sahiron, himself an MNLF fighter before he joined the ASG.

Gov't confidence in MNLF shaken; ₱450,000 turned over

From page A1

armament provision in the 1996 peace agreement between the government and the MNLF would be among the matters to be discussed in a tripartite meeting in March, which would involve the OIC.

"It was a crisis situation, a serious crisis situation so I handled it on a crisis mode," Dureza said, adding that "there's going to be a lot of work" to be done now to restore the level of government confidence in the MNLF to where it was.

Goodwill money

Dureza spoke to reporters when he brought Dolorfino and Santos to the Palace for a possible meeting with President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Earlier yesterday, while still in Zamboanga, Dureza denied any ransom was paid for the release of the Dolorfino group and said the amount handed over to the MNLF was "a goodwill for other concerns."

Dolorfino said the cash assistance for the families of the slain MNLF members was "done according to Muslim practices."

The slain Moro guerrillas were previously described by the military as members of the Abu Sayyaf Group.

Sulu Gov. Benjamin Loong said the money was never intended as ransom.

"That was all blood money, and as practiced by every Tausug, we have to pay a certain amount for the death of a loved one," the governor said.

A local official in Sulu said the amount paid was P450,000.

For the first time, a top military official yesterday acknowledged that the nine alleged Abu Sayyaf members killed by Marines in an encounter in Patikul, Sulu, on Jan. 18 were MNLF members.

Settled issue

The alleged "misencounter," which also claimed the lives of three Marines, was among the issues raised by MNLF commander Habier Malik when he and his men detained Dolorfino's team.

Lt. Gen. Eugenio Cedo, head of the Western Mindanao Command, said the issue had been resolved.

"Actually they were mistakenly identified (to be Abu Sayyaf members). The MNLF admitted it already, those were their men," Cedo said on the phone. *(See story above.)*

Navy and Marine officials previously insisted those killed were Abu Sayyaf members.

A Marine spokesperson said the MNLF leadership might not be aware that the Front was being infiltrated by Abu Sayyaf bandits.

1996 accord

"The MNLF leadership may not know that ASG members are infiltrating their ranks," Lt. Col. Ariel Caculitan said.

He said one of the people captured in the Jan. 18 encounter had admitted he was an Abu Sayyaf member applying to join the MNLF.

"We do not want to complicate the situation. Our enemies are the Abu Sayyaf," Caculitan stressed.

The Dolorfino incident has prompted Ms Arroyo to order the fast-tracking of the implementation of the 1996 peace pact.

"She has instructed Secretary Dureza to coordinate with the Cabinet to start implementation of the immediately doable provisions of the 1996 agreement even ahead of the scheduled tripartite meet," Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye said.

Bunye reaffirmed Ms Arroyo's commitment to achieve a comprehensive peace in Mindanao, which included ensuring that the rebellion case against MNLF leader Nur Misuari, who has been detained since 2002, be resolved immediately.

'I really prayed'

Dureza and Dolorfino would rather leave it up to other government agencies to decide whether charges should be filed against the MNLF "captors" of the government peace team.

"It's not up to me to make that determination, let the other agencies take care of that," Dureza said.

Undersecretary Santos said that when his group was detained, he turned to prayer.

"On my own, I prayed," Santos said. "It was as if I knew that I had become just one of the cards in the deck and that there would come a time when I would just be dealt. So I really prayed."

Dureza said he called Misuari upon learning of the detention of the government team to ask if he could help.

"(Misuari) said he was not in touch with them but later I learned that he spoke to Malik," Dureza said, referring to the leader of the group that detained Dolorfino and his companions.

"I'm sorry I can't help you. If I establish communications with them I have a case in court that could be affected," he quoted Misuari as telling him. *With a report from Donna Pazzibugan*

Mahathir says Bush, Blair more evil than Saddam

From page A1

than al-Qaida's suicide bombers around the world.

"History should remember Blair and Bush as the killers of children, or as the lying prime minister and president," said Mahathir, long known for frequent and scathing verbal attacks on Western countries and culture.

As prime minister, Mahathir was unabashedly vocal in his criticism of the United States, Britain and Australia. After stepping down in October 2003, he has become even more strident.

"What Blair and Bush have done is worse than what Saddam had done," Mahathir, 81, said in a speech to inaugurate a three-day conference organized by his nongovernment organization, Perdana, and aimed at criminalizing war.

War tribunal

On Wednesday, conference delegates are expected to formally launch a war tribunal that would hold "trials" for world leaders, including Bush and Blair, against whom common citizens file complaints.

The tribunal will not have the legal authority of any international organization and will not be able to impose penalties, but Mahathir said its aim is to condemn the accused in history books.

"We should not hang Blair if the tribunal finds him guilty, but he should always carry the label 'War Criminal, Killer of Children, Liar,'" Mahathir said. "And so should Bush and the pocket Bush of the Bushland of Australia," he said, referring to Australia's Prime Minister John Howard, a staunch ally in Washington's campaign against terrorism.

KL commission

Seventeen people—nine from Iraq, five from the Palestinian territories and three from Lebanon—have arrived for the peace conference, where they will submit oral or written complaints to the so-called Kuala Lumpur War Crimes Commission.

After investigations, the commission will decide whether the leaders accused in the complaints should stand trial, albeit in absentia, at the war tribunal.

Mahathir said terrorist attacks, such as those of Sept. 11, 2001, are weak people's retaliation against oppression by powerful countries.

In the war on terror ordered by Bush, Mahathir was a front-line Asian ally of the US immediately after the Sept. 11 attacks, arresting and jailing more than 100 suspected Islamic sympathizers of al-Qaida in Malaysia.

Root cause

However, Mahathir maintains that the root cause of Islamic terrorism is the injustices of the West, especially in the Palestinian territories and Iraq.

Terrorism cannot be condoned, but neither can the "cruel retaliation by powerful countries," he said.

The Sept. 11 attackers may have killed about 3,000 people, but about 600,000 people have been killed during the US-led war in Iraq and Afghanistan, he said.

"The terror caused (by powerful countries) is actually greater, and the powerful countries are much more terrorists than the suicide bombers," he said. *AP*

Bosnian NGOs nominate Mahathir for Nobel Peace Prize

KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA—Malaysia's former premier Mahathir Mohamad has been nominated for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize by four Bosnia-Herzegovina nongovernment groups for being the developing world's "most courageous advocate," a newspaper reported Sunday.

Mahathir influenced the world on ideas about how ethnic diversity should be managed, The Star said, quoting the nomination paper signed by representatives from the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology, the Congress of Bosnik Intellectuals, the Serb Civic Council and the Croat National Council.

Ejup Ganic—chancellor of the Sarajevo School of Science and Technology—worked closely with Mahathir when Malaysia provided humanitarian aid during the 1990s conflict that fractured the former Yugoslavia.

Mahathir is the third World's "most illustrious contemporary" and its "most courageous advocate," Ganic was quoted as saying.

The groups also hailed Mahathir as a representative of moderate Islam, and for his work as an ambassador for peace in conflict-prone Muslim areas such as southern Thailand, the report said.

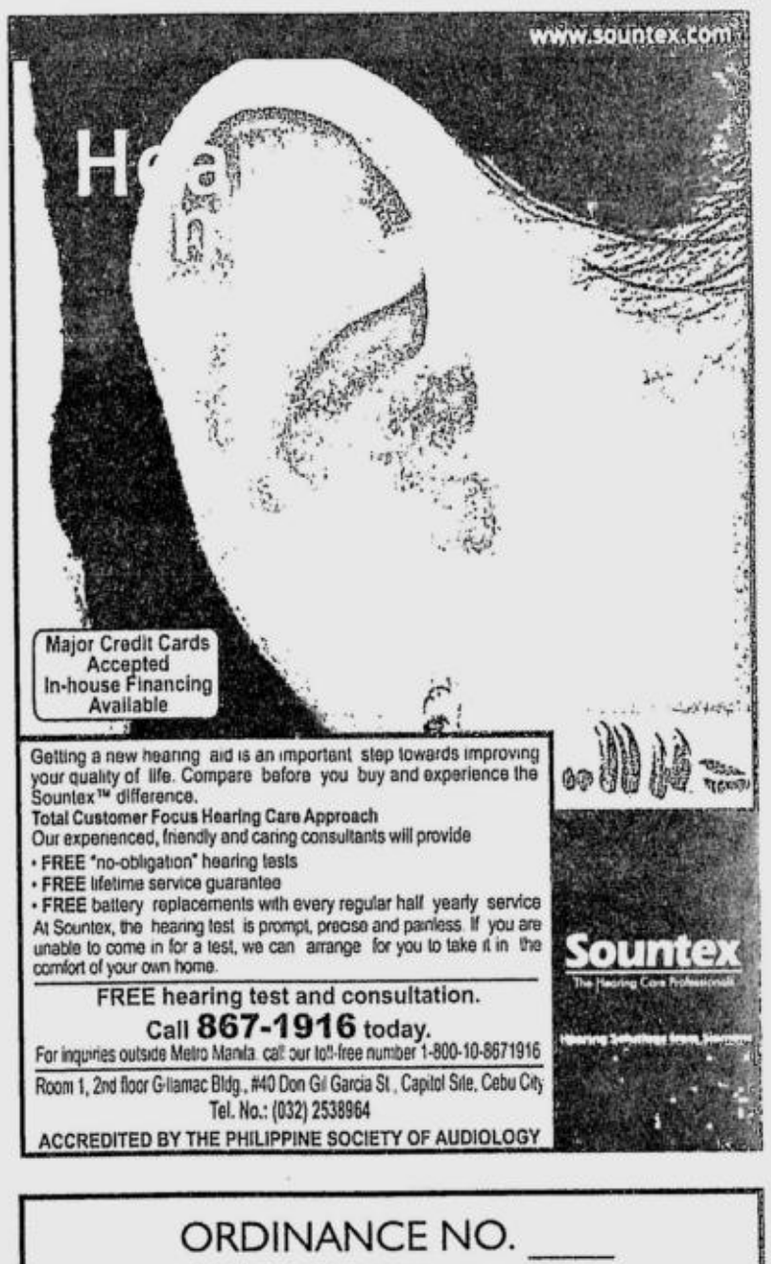
Mahathir, 81, retired from public office in 2003 after more than 20 years as Malaysia's prime minister.

His aides were not immediately available Sunday for comment on the report.

The nomination period for the 2007 Nobel Peace Prize closed on Feb. 1. Among others nominated this year were former US Vice President Al Gore for his efforts to create awareness of the dangers of global warming.

The secretive Nobel committee never comments on specific nominations, but members often note that anyone can be nominated.

Last year, there were 191 nominations for the peace prize, which went to Bangladeshi economist Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank he founded to help the poor. *AP*



Settling disputes without a trial

From page A1

cessfully mediated between estranged spouses, the parties agreed to settle in less than a month.

Fair

The complainant describes the mediation process as *"madali"* (easy) and the compromise agreement signed with the defendant as "very good." The defendant says that he has no regrets *("walay pagmahay")* about mediation and that the result is "fair" and has brought him peace of mind.

As an alternative to litigation, mediation in the courts is undertaken after a case comes before the judge for pre-trial. Once the judge determines that the case falls under the category of "mediatable cases" and orders it referred to the PMC unit, the mediator takes over.

Eligible cases

Cases eligible for mediation are all civil cases, settlement of estates and cases covered by the Rule on Summary Procedure, including collection of debts, ejectment of apartment tenants, and inheritance disputes among family members.

Also covered are civil and criminal cases cognizable by the Lupong Tagapamayapa under the Katarungang Pambarangay Law, such as disputes between neighbors over property; civil aspect of Batas Pambansa No. 22 (Bouncing Check Law); and civil aspect of quasi-offenses, like negligence resulting in physical injuries or damage to property, or imprudence with violation of the Motor Vehicle Law.

In CAM, the mediator helps disputants reach an agreement so that the case does not go to trial.

The discussion does not dwell on the merits or legal aspects of the case but focuses on solutions that satisfy both parties. On the basis of the "compromise agreement" that the parties prepare and sign, the judge renders a ruling to dismiss the case.

Unclogging the courts

Mediation helps not only the litigants but also the judges and the courts. Retired Court of Appeals Justice Alfredo J. Lagamon, now a private lawyer in Cagayan de Oro, says, "The mediation program helps a lot in unclogging the courts."

Regional Trial Court Judge Evelyn G. Nery concurs. Having encouraged her husband, an engineer, to be a mediator, she says that mediation "tremendously helps unburden the courts." She reports that out of 10 cases she refers for mediation, 7 result in settlement.

For Renato A. Fuentes, a Davao City RTC executive judge, mediation is a "very effective tool" in helping dispose of court cases. By resolving the relatively easier cases such as the collection of debts, mediation gives judges more time to focus on the more difficult ones such as heinous crimes, observes mediator Jaime Yap.

High success rate

Philja data indicate that mediated cases in PMC units nationwide have a 71-percent success rate. Considering that the caseload of courts runs at about 520 per justice or judge, mediation does provide a way for unburdening the courts.

Philja is stepping up efforts to expand CAM throughout the archipelago. It has established 77 PMC units in Metro Manila, Pampanga, La Union, Benguet, Metro Cebu, Bacolod City, Tacloban City, Metro Davao, Cagayan de Oro and General Santos. These are staffed by 448 mediators, who have been trained and accredited by Philja.

Groundswell

"There is a groundswell of request for mediation," says Bernardo T. Ponferrada, head of the Philja Judicial Reforms Office and who oversees the CAM program.

A retired Deputy Court Administrator of the Supreme Court, he attributes this demand to the growing acceptance of mediation as a better option than litigation.

Indeed, as the constituents of Davao and Cagayan de Oro know by experience, why go to court and spend precious time and money when one can settle through mediation.

IN THE KNOW

Backlog cases total 800,000

PHILIPPINE COURTS FAILED TO decide on six out of every 10 cases in 2004, according to the National Statistical Coordination Board.

That year's caseload (new cases plus leftover cases from the previous year) reached about 1.4 million. Of this number, more than 800,000 were not disposed of or resolved.

The Court of Tax Appeals registered the highest backlog rate of 76 percent (671 out of 882 cases unresolved), followed by the Sandiganbayan (1,862 out of 2,526 cases or 73 percent).

The lowest rate was achieved by Shari'a Circuit Courts, which failed to dispose of 304 out of 951 cases (32 percent).

The Supreme Court had a 61-percent backlog rate, while the Court of Appeals had 64 percent. ***Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research***

ORDINANCE NO. ____

ORDINANCE WITHDRAWING FROM PUBLIC USE THAT CERTAIN PARCEL OF LAND SITUATED AT CALLE BODEGA, BEING THE DEAD-END PORTION OF T. AYALA STREET IN ERMITA, MANILA, BARANGAY 663, ZONE 71 DISTRICT V, MANILA, RECLASSIFYING FROM ROAD LOT TO PATRIMONIAL PROPERTY, PROVIDING FOR ITS USE AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES.

Be it ordained, by the City Council of Manila, THAT:

SECTION 1. Calle Bodega, being the dead-end portion of T. Ayala Street in Ermita, Manila located at Barangay 663, Zone 71, District V, Manila, more or less 50 square meters in area, is hereby withdrawn from public use as road lot and reclassified as patrimonial property

SEC. 2. The subject road lot sought to be reclassified under this Ordinance shall be used as homelot to form part of the City Government's Urban Housing Program to be awarded thru sale and on installment basis to the actual bona fide tenant/s thereat

SEC. 3. The City Urban Settlements Office shall oversee the effective implementation of this Ordinance

SEC. 4. This Ordinance shall take effect upon its approval.

Enacted by the City Council of Manila at its regular session today.

Approved by His Honor, the Mayor on,

APPROVED:

JOSE L. ATIENZA, JR.
Mayor
City of Manila

DANILO B. LACUNA
Vice-Mayor and Presiding Officer
City Council, Manila

ATTESTED:

EMMANUEL R. SISON
Secretary to the Mayor

RODOLFO F. LAPID
Secretary to the City Council

PRINCIPAL AUTHORS: HON. RICARDO S. ISIP, HON. ERNESTO G. DIONISIO, Majority Floor Leader

ILT:acl/jem/jlc

CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that the City Council ordered the publication of the above proposed Ordinance during its regular session held on January 30, 2007, pursuant to the provision of Section 17, Article III of R.A. 409, as amended, otherwise known as the Revised Charter of the City of Manila.

RODOLFO F. LAPID
City Government Dept. Head III
(Secretary to the City Council)

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2007

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Bongbong not excited by Mike D invitation

LAOAG CITY—ILOCOS NORTE Gov. Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is lukewarm to the offer of the Arroyo administration for him or his sister, Rep. Imee Marcos, to join the so-called unity ticket, saying political ideologies are irreconcilable.

Marcos, who is identified with the opposition, said he could not see himself switching to the administration, which he said he has been criticizing.

"We've been opposed to the administration in the last six years. Joining them suddenly is... like you're saying 'I was wrong, you were right,'" he told reporters here.

"The others would jump at the chance to run because [at least when you are with the administration] there is an assurance that you will not be cheated. That is one thing that the administration can offer to everybody."

He said he did not want to be grouped with known senatorial candidates who had been accused of switching parties because they were not accommodated in the other.

"It is a question of ideology

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

and belief. [The problem with Philippine politics is that] ideology and causes never come into the political process that is why changing parties means nothing," Marcos said.

Presidential chief of staff Michael Defensor earlier offered Marcos and his sister, Imee, a place in the unity slate of the administration as part of reconciling Edsa forces under Ms Arroyo's 10-point agenda.

Defensor said he also welcomed the possibility of negotiating with the Marcos family.

Cristina Arzadon, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Army tells MILF: Move out or face new assault

MIDSAYAP, NORTH COTABATO—The military's 6th Infantry Division has warned Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) forces in remote villages that the Army would launch an offensive should they refuse to withdraw from these villages.

Fighting could erupt again if the rebels would not return to their camps in Maguindanao, according to Maj. Gen. Nehemias Pajarito.

Pajarito, 6th ID chief, told officials of a ceasefire monitoring panel and the Malaysian-led International Monitoring Team in Cotabato City that a shooting war could only be avoided if the MILF rebels, now numbering about 3,000, would return to their original positions across the Pulangi River prior to the Jan. 25 clashes between soldiers and MILF guerrillas.

Policemen, backed by elements of the 40th Infantry Battalion, are conducting clearing operations in Barangay Tugal to pave the way for the return of families who have been displaced by the fighting.

At least 6,000 people fled their homes at the height of the clashes, believed sparked by a dispute over pieces of land.

Rockets

But while the policemen were conducting the clearing operations, guerrillas fired rockets as soldiers approached the village, killing one infantryman and wounding another, according to Col. Julieto Ando, 6th ID spokesperson.

This prompted the 6th ID's artillery division to fire at least seven rounds from its 105 mm howitzers. There was no reported casualty on the rebels' side.

But Von Al Haq, MILF ceasefire panel chair, said the MILF has returned to their original positions prior to the conflict triggered by a land dispute.

"It was the military that advanced to MILF's position, triggering a brief firefight Friday," he said.

Pajarito also warned the guerrillas against putting up road blocks along portions of the Midsayap-Datu Piang, Maguindanao highway.

Pajarito said an Army sergeant and his companion were executed last week when MILF guerrillas, after flagging him down at a rebel checkpoint, found he was a member of the 38th Infantry Battalion.

"It was a clear violation of the ceasefire accord," Pajarito told officials of the ceasefire panel and the IMT.

Time to withdraw

"We give them ample time to withdraw, otherwise we will be forced to push our way there," said Pajarito.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said as far as the MILF leadership is concerned, it has abided by the localized truce.

"Mainly, we repositioned our forces and we cease and desist from offensives. But we are the ones being attacked," said Kabalu.

Ando said about 1,000 MILF fighters in various towns of Maguindanao have been sighted moving toward the Midsayap-Datu Piang border.

"We have asked the MILF ceasefire panel to convince their commanders to move away from the highway to prevent clashes with soldiers," he said.

The road linking Midsayap and Datu Piang had been closed since last week.

Classes are expected to resume in at least six of the 13 public schools that were temporarily used as evacuation centers.

Residents of Barangays Tugal, Rangaban and Sambolawan still remain in various refugee sites.

Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

A WOMAN and her children take shelter in a small church in Barangay Lower Glad in Midsayap, North Cotabato, following clashes between government troops and Moro guerrillas.

JEOFFREY MAITEM/INQUIRER MINDANAO

ROUNDUP

5 wear cop uniforms in rob

CEBU CITY—Five men wearing police uniforms took at least P500,000 from the office of a company distributing popular consumer products in Cebu City and killed one of two security guards during a robbery Jan. 29. Senior Supt. Patrocinio Comendador, Cebu City police office acting director, identified the slain guard as Edgardo Embolode Sr., 32, of San Fernando, Cebu.

Jhunnex Napallacan, Inquirer Visayas

Rebs seek gun ban exemption

BACOLOD—Members of the Revolutionary Proletarian Army-Alex Boncayao Brigade, who entered into peace talks with the government in 2000, have applied for gun ban exemptions at the Commission on Elections in Manila, the military said. Lt. Col. David Tan, spokesperson of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division, said the granting of gun ban exemptions to RPA-ABB members depends on the Comelec. In previous elections, complaints were aired against the display of firearms by the RPA-ABB in Negros Occidental

Carla P. Gomez, Inquirer Visayas

Tourist dies in Sagada fall

SAGADA, Mt. Province—An Italian tourist died after he fell into a 100-meter deep ravine in Echo Valley, a popular tourist destination here, last week. George Datliyan, a member of the Sagada Environmental Guides Association (Sega), said Giovanni Pozzoni, 42, was taking pictures at the Echo Valley when he stepped on dried pine needles, slipped and fell. Reports said Pozzoni, whose head hit a rock, died before reaching the St. Theodore's Hospital, some 200 meters from the accident site. Datliyan said Pozzoni and his companions, Italian Faravelli Alberto and Filipino Jerson Palgue, did not register with their office and went to Echo Valley accompanied only by a teenager living in the area. Local and tourism officials require visitors to register with Sega so they could provide them professional guides familiar with the terrain and the town's famous caves. Alberto said he and Pozzoni arrived in the country on Jan. 21.

Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

2 guards convicted of rape

BAGUIO CITY—A judge here found two men guilty of raping and abducting an 18-year-old woman in 2005. In a 25-page decision on Jan. 18, Judge Ruben Ayson, of the regional trial court, sentenced Edarwin Rabanera, a supervisor of security guards in a condominium here, and security guard Randy Marron, to at least 30 years in prison and asked them to pay the victim a total of P200,000 in damages. Court records showed that Rabanera raped the woman in a house in Barangay Lower Rock Quarry on April 20, 2005. The following day, Rabanera and Marron forcibly took the woman to Pangasinan where Rabanera again raped her. Records showed that Rabanera and the woman knew each other as the woman stayed in a unit reserved for employees of a local shopping mall in the condominium complex. The court dismissed Rabanera's defense that he and the woman were lovers.

Elmer Kristian Dauigoy, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Rob gang leader arrested

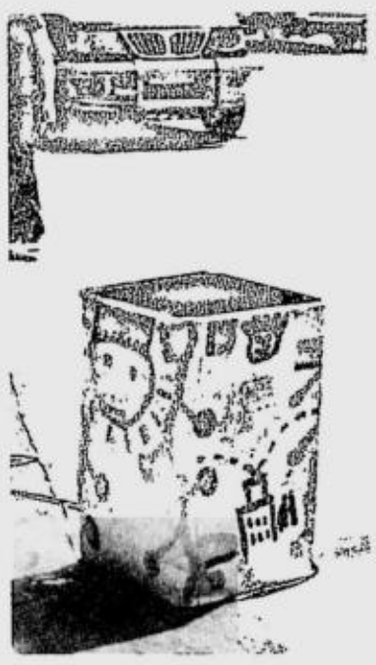
BALANGA CITY—A suspected leader of a robbery syndicate preying on Indian traders in Bataan was arrested in Barangay Cataning here on Friday. Senior Supt. Odelon Ramoneda, Bataan police director, said at least 20 Indian businessmen identified Oscar Bartolome as one of the men who robbed them in separate cases in the province. Tirath Singh, an Indian businessman living in Pilar town, said Bartolome was driving the tricycle used by the men who robbed him two weeks ago.

Greg Refraccion, Inquirer Central Luzon

Cartoon ban sought

DECRYING the negative impact of the so-called hentai animé cartoons on the moral upbringing and education of the young, the party-list group Alliance of Volunteer Educators (AVE), in a statement, yesterday asked authorities to censor, if not ban, the production of what they said were pornographic video materials.

Baguio's trash cans make disappearing act


ONE OF Baguio City's disappearing trash cans.

VINCENT CABREZA/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—OFFICIALS OF this summer capital, a hall of fame awardee as the country's cleanest city in the 1990s, have realized that public trash cans here have been missing for three years now.

Romeo Concio, chief of the general services office here, said it is an embarrassing situation for a city whose streets were first recognized by the government as the cleanest in the country in 1957.

Baguio became a hall of fame awardee in 1998 for topping the list of cleanest and greenest urbanized city from 1995 to 1997.

But Baguio's success in its cleanliness campaign relied solely on civic groups.

Most trash cans in downtown Baguio and in the city's parks have been donated by various groups here since 1990.

Concio said the city government bought at least 30 trash cans in early 2000 and spent P10,000 for each of these. Most of them also disappeared, he said.

The last batch of trash cans donated to the city were encased in fiberglass housing that divided biodegradable from nonbiodegradable trash.

The trash cans, however, bore the name of former Mayor Bernardo Vergara. When suspended Mayor Braulio Yaranon won the 2004 mayoral race, he ordered the trash cans' housing removed.

The tin cans that the fiberglass boxes used to encase also disappeared. Government officials suspected they were stolen for scrap.

Some of these fiberglass casings have been converted into flowerpots.

An advocate of recycling, Concio was responsible for initiating the city's solid waste management program when garbage disposal was under his jurisdiction.

The government has since created a separate environment office, although city records indicate it never requested for funds to buy new trash cans.

Concio was asked by acting Mayor Reinaldo Bautista Jr. to revive the Alay sa Kalinisan (ASK), a civic group that had embarked on a cleanliness drive here.

The group helped the city solicit trash cans from Baguio-based companies with active community support programs such as Texas Instruments Philippines Inc., Philex Corp. and the Benguet Corp.

But the city government realized the downside to relying on goodwill.

Most of the cans were invisible to most government books of accounts because none was bought using public funds, said Benedicto Alhambra, city tourism officer.

Gov wants recycling plant shut down for toxic fumes

PILI, CAMARINES SUR—GOV. Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte is pushing for the immediate closure of a waste recycling plant that emitted toxic fumes from burning industrial wastes.

Dozens of residents of a coastal village had been taken ill by the fumes last year.

The plant, in Barangay Mabca, Sangay, Camarines Sur, was blamed for the residents' illness but it continued operations.

Three days before Supertyphoon "Reming" slammed into Bicol, the SafeCo Environmental Services Inc. (SafeCo), a waste-recycling firm cleared by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to legally operate, was reported to have burned unknown waste materials inside its compound from 4 p.m. until the early morning of Nov. 28.

The SafeCo was allowed to operate and treat a total volume of 350 metric tons of industrial waste per month by the DENR's Environment Management Bureau, which issued an environmental compliance certificate (ECC) for the plant's operations on May 30, 2003.

The ECC further described the facility to be within a 30,000-square meter area.

But, Villafuerte said, provincial officials found that the permits and the ECC issued by the EMB had already expired in August 2006.

The SafeCo is inside a residential area of Barangay Mabca, which has a population of about 700.

But the residents claimed they hardly knew what was going on inside the SafeCo compound since it started operation four years ago.

Even the arrival and delivery of materials are done in the middle of the night until dawn.

The INQUIRER tried many times to interview the SafeCo management but was not allowed to enter its premises.

The SafeCo even barred the entry of firefighters from the town after residents complained of smoke from the burning of waste materials inside the compound.

The residents described the smoke to be "very black" and "unusually repugnant" in odor. The residents reported also hearing explosions.

Dr. Ricardo Patacsil, municipal health officer, said he suspected there were many more residents who could have been taken ill by the chemical fumes, aside from the 26 cases from Mabca.

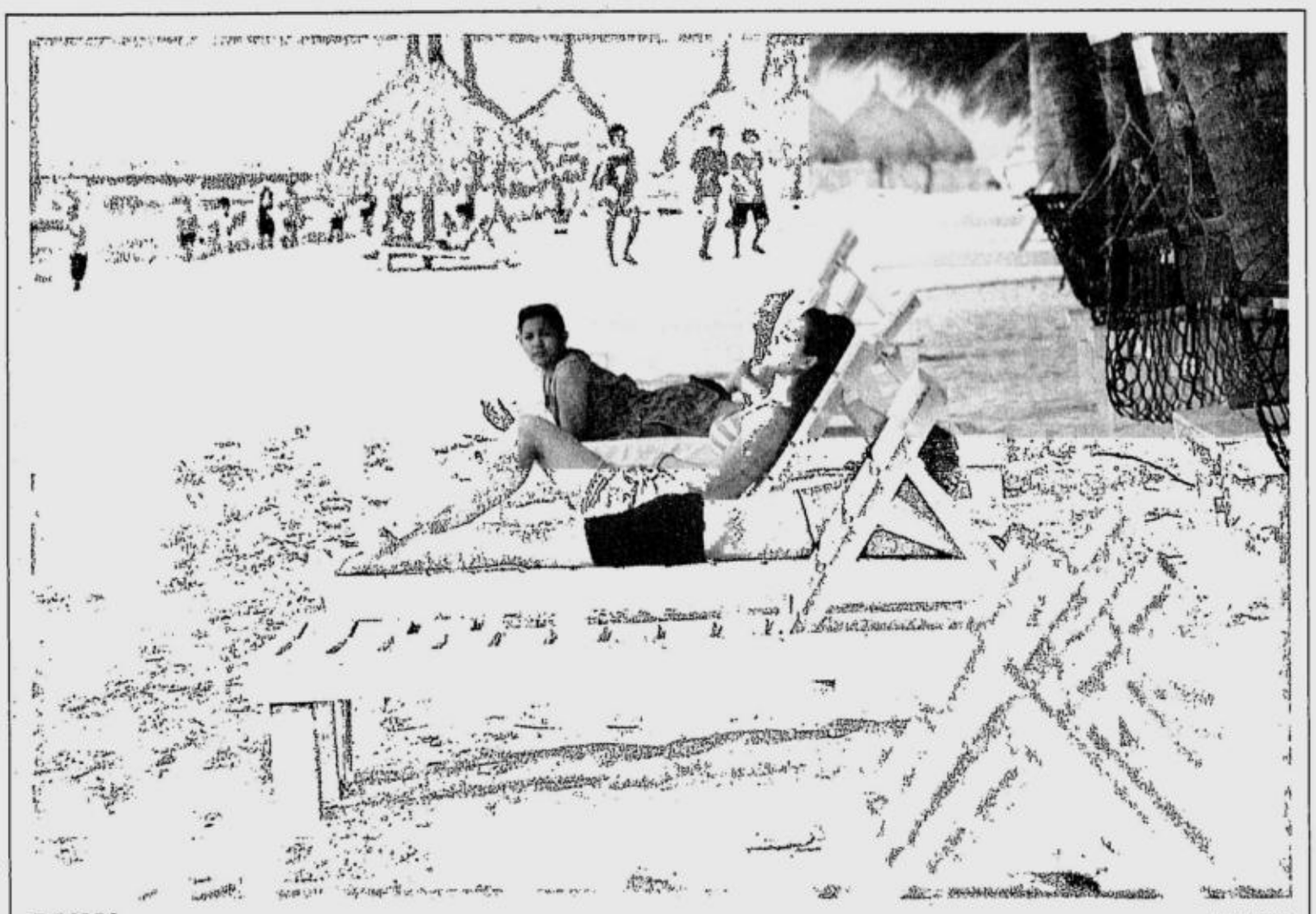
He said, he was informed there were many others who sought medical help elsewhere.

With the report reaching his office last week, Villafuerte dispatched a team of doctors and chemists from the Provincial Epidemiology Survey Unit (Pesu) to Mabca to gather information.

He said it alarmed him that the SafeCo was allowed to process industrial waste materials without a government agency closely monitoring its activities.

The Pesu team reported that the outbreak of illnesses happened several days after Mabca residents were exposed to smoke and fumes that came from unknown burning materials inside the SafeCo on Nov. 27.

Last Jan. 25, the residents formally passed a petition during the barangay assembly to ask the government to close down the SafeCo facility, being a health hazard and threat to the community. *Juan Escandor Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*



BOHOL
Tourists bask in the sun in the beaches of Bohol, one of the country's premiere beach vacationers' destinations.

JESS YUSON

GMA says gov't to rid CARP of 'confrontations'

By Carla P. Gomez
Inquirer Visayas

MAILUM, BAGO CITY—President Macapagal-Arroyo said Friday her administration has a scheme designed to prevent confrontation in the implementation of the agrarian reform program.

"There is a new paradigm that is being proposed to open new lands for agriculture so that we can give farmers a chance to have their own land and, yet, avoid all this bloodshed that is happening (in the implementation of land reform)," Ms Arroyo said.

The President was responding to a question here on whether the government would review its policies on the implementation of land reform to prevent further bloodshed and whether the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) should be implemented beyond 2008.

Arroyo said the government plans to open two million hectares of its own lands to agriculture.

"We will give the landless farmers the first option to be there, as part of land reform. We want to spend a lot of money on support services, specifically irrigation and farm-to-market roads," she said.

The farmer-beneficiaries of this new scheme could use their land as collateral to avail themselves of loans so they could become modern agriculture businessmen, Ms Arroyo added.

For this reason, she said, she is pushing for the approval of a law allowing the use of farmland as collateral.

The President said the government has also tried to come up with initiatives to avoid continuing conflict in the implementation of CARP.

"That is one of the things that the agrarian reform secretary is doing. What I am saying is let's make land reform, as much as possible, non-confrontational. Let's open up new farms for agribusiness. Let's allow farmers the right to use their farms as collateral. Let's modernize our land reform," she said.

The President's stand came amid calls from various government, Church and planters' groups in Negros Occidental for a comprehensive review of the agrarian reform law to end the violence caused by its implementation.

Earlier, Agrarian Reform Secretary Nasser Pangandaman said the P15-billion budget approved by Congress would allow the agency to pursue its programs for land distribution and support services for agrarian reform beneficiaries.

Pangandaman said for land distribution, the agency has set a target of 130,000 ha this year.

The DAR seeks to award a total of 4.29 million ha of land to beneficiaries. *With a report from Christine Gaylican*

DENR to tap tribal folk in war on poaching

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THE Cordillera region's environment and irrigation officials welcomed the plan of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to deputize indigenous peoples as DENR law enforcers.

DENR regional executive director Samuel Penafiel and National Irrigation Administration regional manager Abraham Akilit said the move would boost the two agencies' bid to make the region's indigenous communities partners in the rehabilitation of endangered watersheds and denuded forests.

Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes told a gathering of local officials in Manila last week that local communities, especially indigenous peoples, are being tapped to implement laws and regulations pertaining to the environment.

"If indigenous communities will be given such role, it will be a perfect combination of state enacted laws and cultural based management practices," Akilit said.

The DENR and the NIA in the region are about to embark on a master development plan intended to rescue the Chico River from its current critical stage to prevent its extinction.

Chico, Agno, Abra and Magat are the region's major river systems that suffer from environmental degradation but plans are afoot to save Chico River first. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

'Pangalay,' ancient Sulu dance, breathes, survives

By Tita Martinez-Sicat
Contributor

"We are a people. A people do not throw away their geniuses. If they do, it is our duty as witnesses for the future to collect them again for the sake of our children, if necessary, bone by bone."
—Alice Walker

TEMPLE OF DANCE IS the meaning of the *pangalay*—the dance of the people of the Sulu Archipelago for centuries, long before the Christians came and long even before the Muslims did.

The ancient dance has survived because the people have, through the centuries, refused to be colonized in any form or by any means, by east or west.

In the *pangalay* can be felt or seen the nature of our people: dignified, serene, gentle, peaceful, graceful, loving.

It is a spiritual dance. It begins from within the soul and moves with the breath of the dancer, and thus performs in unison with other dancers. The individual is always aware of and acts in harmony with those around him or her.

Thus, the *pangalay* is danced spontaneously on any occasion (wedding, birthday, arrival and departure), anywhere (beach, boat, porch, etc.), and by anyone (young, old, male, female).

There is unity among dancers, that is, among community members. Such oneness is the heart of a community.

The spread of the *pangalay* to Luzon and beyond is a storied one:

Two students from the Far Eastern University in Manila met, fell in love and married. They were not ordinary students. One, called "Dats" Amilbangsa by his friends, was a datu, a brother of the late Sultan of Sulu; the other, a mayor's daughter from Marikina.

In Tawi-Tawi, the datu's bride, Ligaya Fernando, was beguiled by the celebratory dances. Learning through keen observation, she arrived at her own method of teaching the *pangalay*.

She founded the Tambuli Dance Troupe, which she brought to Manila and abroad for performances of the *pangalay*. She researched, photographed, drew and painted the dance style, its music and costumes.

Her book, "Pangalay," was published by the Ayala Foundation in 1983.

LIGAYA Fernando was beguiled by the celebratory dances. Learning through keen observation, she arrived at her own method of teaching the "pangalay."

PHOTO COURTESY OF EARTHIAN MAGAZINE

She also began research on the visual arts of the Sulu Archipelago. Twenty years of detailed and comprehensive research were condensed in her second book, "Ukkil," recently published by the Ateneo Press.

In 1999, the AlunAlun Dance Circle was formed by a group of professionals captivated by the *pangalay* style and committed to its preservation and popularization. Every Sunday afternoon, the circle dances in the studio built by Ligaya for teaching and rehearsing the *pangalay*.

After having taught the dance at the University of the Philippines Diliman, Ligaya staged performances at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and the UP Abelardo Hall.

Other performances by the AlunAlun Dance Circle have been in at the Far Eastern University, Central Colleges of the Philippines, Emilio Aguinaldo Colleges, Ateneo de Manila, Marikina Riverbanks, Rockwell, Hyatt Regency and Intercontinental hotels, conferences, family gatherings and book launchings.

Late November last year, it joined the Asian Performing Arts Festival in Taipei, together with professional dance groups representing Japan, Korea, India, Thailand and Taiwan. The Filipinos' repertoire was exclusively the *pangalay* style but to music ranging from classical Bach and boogie to Filipino pop and classical *kulintangan*.

On the occasion of February as Arts Month, an international conference on the conservation and popularization of the *pangalay* has been organized by the AlunAlun Dance Circle, supported by the Japan Foundation, United Nations Economic, Scientific and Cultural Organization, National Commission on Culture and the Arts, and Marikina City.

The meeting will be held on Feb. 8-10, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Riverbend Hotel's Conference Hall at Riverbanks, Marikina (website: www.pangalaydance.com).

The Filipino and Malaysian gurus of Asian dance and dance conservation will be keynote speakers.

Dancers and teachers from Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, United States, Thailand and Japan will demonstrate the kinship of Asian dances to one another and formulate an agenda for the preservation and popularization of Asian dances.

Dance teachers from as far as the Cordilleras to Zamboanga are expected to arrive at the gathering of scholars, choreographers, cultural workers and dancers to focus on the conservation of Philippine and Asian dance.

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Justice
BUREAU OF IMMIGRATION
Magallanes Drive, Intramuros
1002 Manila

MEMORANDUM CIRCULAR NO. AFF-07-001

Implementing rules governing issuance of visa upon arrival to businessmen endorsed by the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industries (PCCI), the current Top 1000 Corporations and the Foreign Chambers of Commerce and Industries (FCCI)

WHEREAS, pursuant to Memorandum Circular No. AFF-06-016, the Bureau of Immigration will issue visa upon arrival to businessmen endorsed by DTI, PCCI, current Top 1000 Corporations and FCCI;

WHEREAS, Section 9 (a) of Commonwealth Act (C.A.) No. 613, as amended, provides that "aliens departing from any place outside the Philippines who are otherwise admissible and who qualify within one of the following categories, may be admitted as non-immigrants: (a) A temporary visitor coming for business or for pleasure or for reasons of health;

WHEREAS, Section 3 of C.A. No. 613 authorizes the Immigration Commissioner to issue rules and regulations necessary for the implementation of all immigration laws;

WHEREFORE, the following rules are hereby adopted to implement Memorandum Circular No. AFF-06-016.

Section 1. Requirements for the issuance of the visa.-

a.) Duly accomplished application form containing the following information:
- name as appearing on the passport/travel document
- Date/Place of Birth
- Nationality, passport number, place and date of issue and validity
- Permanent foreign and local addresses of the applicant
- Flight details
- Travel itinerary

Sponsoring business organizations/DTI, address, name of authorized officer and his signature

b.) Letter request from the authorized representative of the DTI;

Only DTI may request the Bureau to issue Visa Upon Arrival. The three agencies/entities namely, Top 1000 Corporations, PCCI and FCCI should forward their requests to DTI and DTI will endorse said request to the Bureau.

c.) Derogatory Clearance; and

d.) Payment of $25 visa fee and P 10 legal fee.

Section 2. Filing of Letter Request.-

The letter request shall be filed by the authorized representative of the DTI forty eight (48) hours before the scheduled date of arrival of the applicant.

The letter shall be addressed to the Commissioner thru the Chief of the Immigration Regulation Division, who shall have the authority to approve or disapprove the request.

Section 3. Duties of the Chief of IRD or his duly designated official. –

The Chief of IRD or his duly designated official shall advise the Head Supervisors at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and the Airline concerned of the approved request of the applicant. He shall ensure that a programmed database of the applications for Visa Upon Arrival is maintained. The database must show the Bureau's action on the applications and the number of actual admissions. He shall also endeavor to establish special lanes at the airports for arriving passengers who will be admitted under this visa category.

Section 4. Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with sponsoring business organization/DTI.-

A memorandum of agreement shall be entered into by the Bureau, represented by the undersigned, and the DTI, represented by the department head, acting in behalf of DTI, PCCI, FCCI and the current Top 1000 Corporations. The MOA shall state the respective rights and responsibilities of the parties.

Section 5. Validity of the visa and the extensions thereof. -

The visa issued upon arrival shall be valid for a period of thirty (30) days from the date of arrival by the passenger. The same may be extended for a period of another thirty (30) days, upon request filed prior to the expiry of the initial period of thirty (30) days and upon approval by the Commissioner.

Section 6. Conversion to other visa categories. -

Conversion to other visa categories may be allowed subject to existing rules and regulations governing visa conversion from one category to another and provided further that the applicant has not violated any conditions of his stay as a temporary visitor.

Section 7. Applicability. -

Admissions under the Visa Upon Arrival category shall be allowed at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport, Mactan Cebu Internaltional Airport, and Davao International Airport.

Section 8. Effectivity.

This memorandum circular shall take effect fifteen (15) days after its publication in two (2) newspapers of general circulation.

(Sgd.) **ALIPIO F. FERNANDEZ, JR.**
Commissioner

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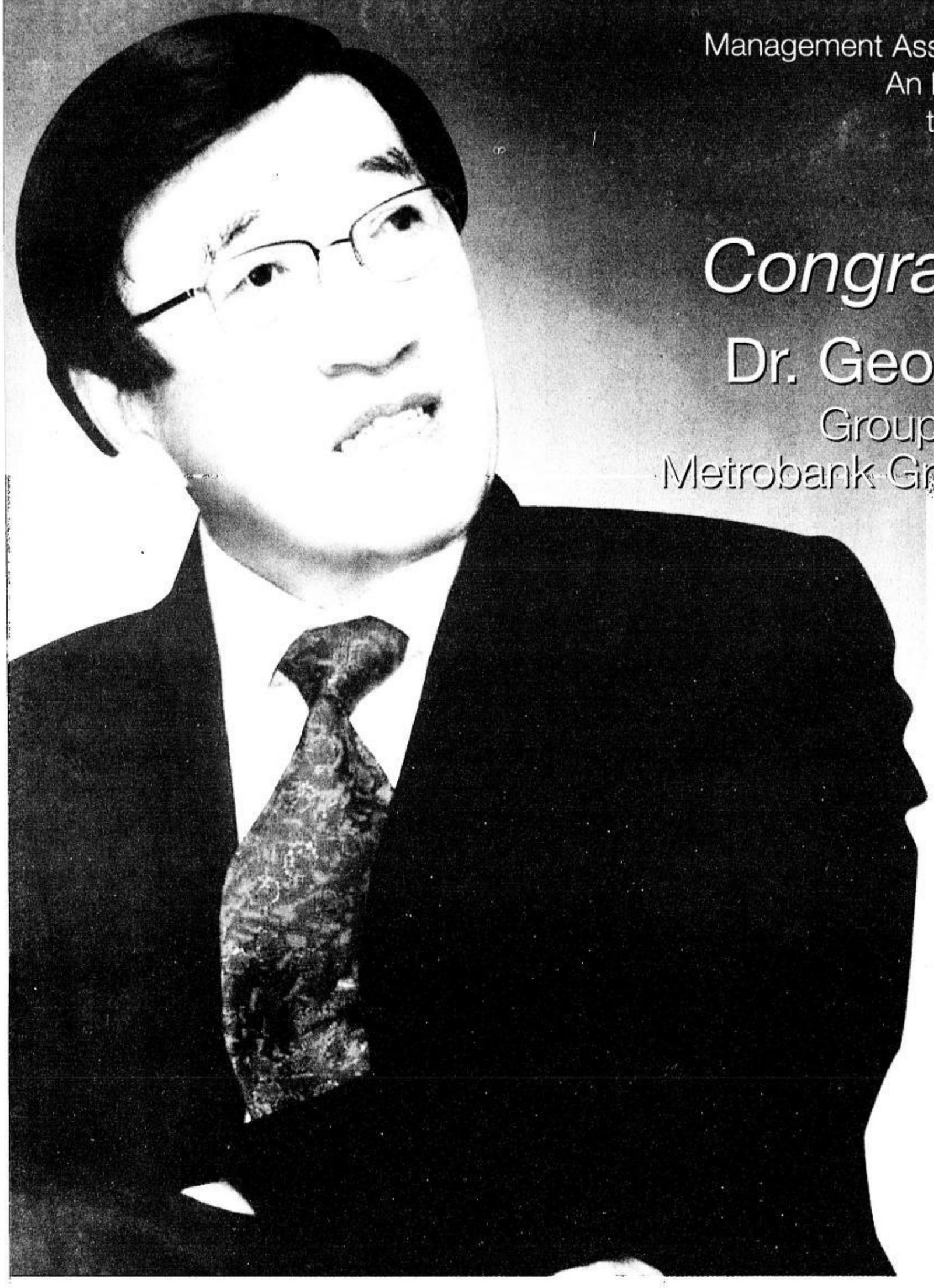

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New marine species find home in Manila

Rare specimens at National Museum show Bohol's rich biodiversity system

A REEF lobster, belonging to a new species called *enoplometopus*, was among the newly discovered marine species found off Panglao Island during a biodiversity project of local and international scientists.
EDWIN BACASMAS

By Tina G. Santos

MEMBERS OF A SCIENTIFIC EXPEDITION team yesterday turned over to the National Museum several specimens of newly discovered marine species, including mollusks and crustaceans, found off Panglao Island in Bohol province.

The new discoveries were the product of the Panglao Marine Biodiversity Project, a research of fauna from the deep sea and coastal ecosystems conducted in the waters around the island from 2004 to 2005.

The project surveyed about 15,000 hectares of Bohol's municipal waters and gathered 1,200 species of decapod crustacean and 6,000 species of mollusk specimens.

Dr. Philippe Bouchet of the French National Museum of Natural History, a member of the expedition team, said that around 150 to 250 of the crustaceans and 1,500 to 2,500 of the mollusks found in Bohol were new species.

"The result of the expedition once again proved the richness of the Philippines' marine biodiversity system ," Bouchet said.

The team which conducted the research was composed of 80 participants from the Philippines, other Southeast Asian countries, Europe and the United States. The study, the most comprehensive survey of deep-sea invertebrates in the tropics, was conducted under the umbrella of the University of San Carlos and the French National Museum of Natural History. It was also supported by grants from the French government and the Paris-based Total Foundation.

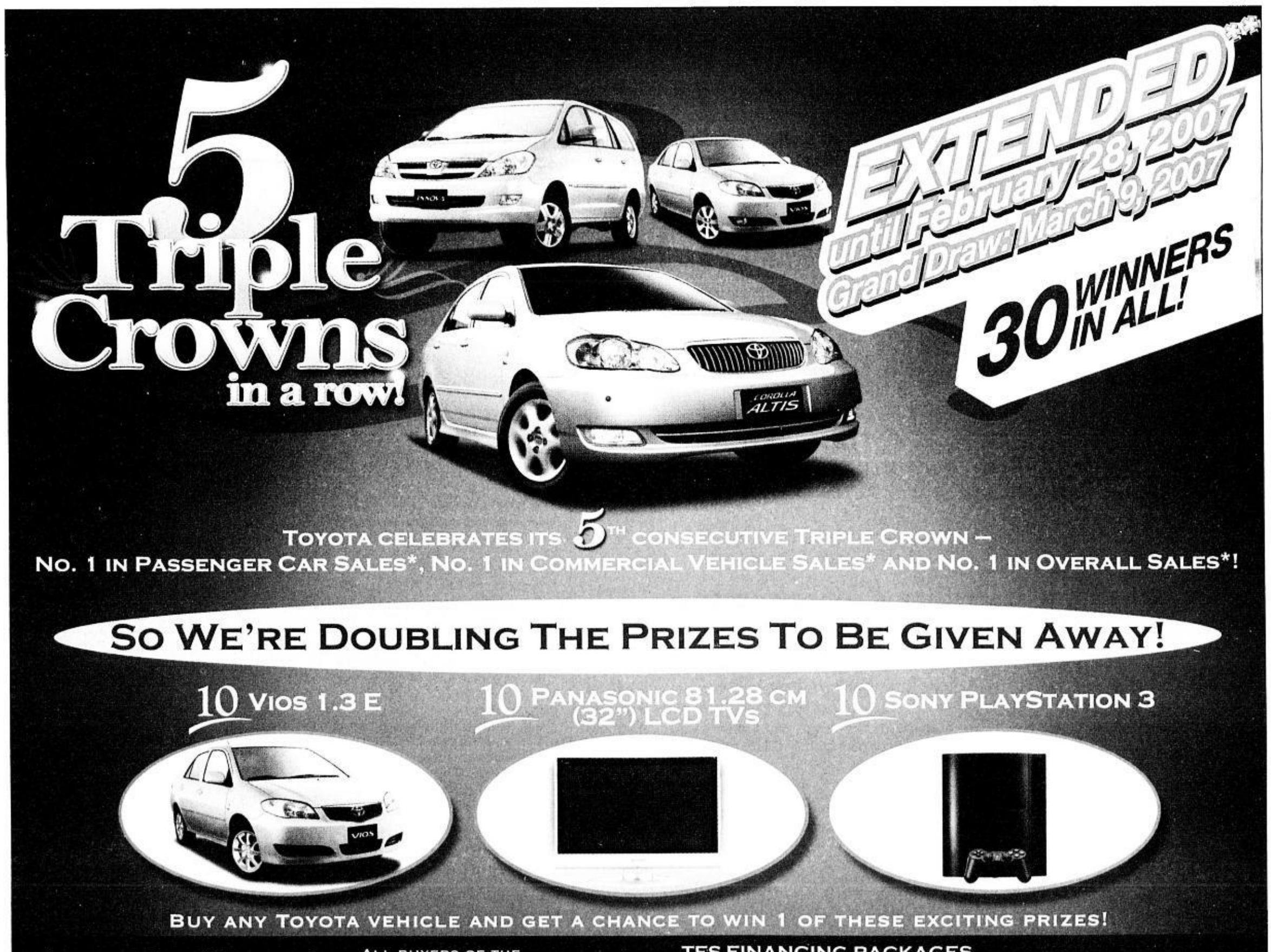
The research team said it also gathered specimens previously regarded as rare to very rare, including those previously known not to exist in the Philippines.

The project also showed that Panglao alone is higher in diversity compared to Japan and the Mediterranean.

Japan's marine fauna barely exceeds 1,600 species of decapods while the Mediterranean has 340 species of decapods and 2,024 species of mollusks, Bouchet said.

He added that coming out with a more de-

NEW MARINE/ A18



DILG-Peewee row on reinstatement continues

By Jocelyn R. Uy

DISMISSED PASAY MAYOR WENCESlao "Peewee" Trinidad yesterday said the Department of Interior Local Government made a mistake when it cited an amendment to the Ombudsman's rules of procedure as its basis for denying his petition for reinstatement as mayor starting Feb. 1.

The DILG last week told Trinidad that it could not grant his request for a "smooth turnover" of duties and functions between him and newly installed Mayor Allan Panaligan as the Ombudsman's rules of procedure stated that an appeal does not stop a decision from being implemented.

Trinidad was suspended for six months beginning last September on allegations that he and other city officials approved allegedly anomalous garbage contracts. Last month, the Ombudsman ordered his dismissal from the service on graft charges. Trinidad has appealed the decision but stressed that he must be reinstated as mayor since there was an earlier order reducing his suspension from six to five months.

Because the Ombudsman's order is not yet final and executory, he added, he should have gone back to his post on Feb. 1.

In a letter to Trinidad, the DILG said this was not possible due to the amended rule.

Trinidad, however, insisted that the rule only applies to an appointed government employee, not to a duly elected official like him.

"An elective official stands on ground different from that of an appointed officer or employee," Trinidad, through his counsel, said in reply to the DILG letter delivered to him last Thursday.

He also maintained that the Local Government Code provides that an elective official may be removed from office by order of the proper court.

"The Office of the Ombudsman is not the proper court envisioned by law. Hence, the DILG cannot implement the penalty of removal or dismissal meted out by the Ombudsman," he stated.

Abandoned Pasay apartment hit by fire

By Jocelyn R. Uy

HOW DID THE FIRE START?

An hourlong blaze that hit an abandoned three-story apartment at the corner of Roxas Boulevard and Gil Puyat Avenue in Pasay City before dawn yesterday left fire investigators puzzled.

Damage to property was pegged at P50,000. No one was reported hurt in the incident.

Insp. Leo Andiso, Pasay fire investigation division chief, said they found nothing that could have triggered the fire that broke out at 5:47 a.m. at the basement of the apartment owned by Vicente Madrigal, he added.

He added that the electricity in the apartment had been cut off after tenants vacated the building in 2003.

"So the fire being electricity-related is not possible," Andiso said, adding that nobody was seen inside the property, which is surrounded by a concrete fence, hours before the blaze began.

Witnesses, however, said they saw some men burning dried leaves outside the fence.

"Maybe they threw the burning leaves over the fence. So far it's the only detail we could connect to the fire, but we are still looking into that," Andiso told the INQUIRER.

The fire which reached the third alarm was put out before it could spread to the Net World hotel located beside the apartment.

Eastern Metro records dip in crime rate

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

THE NUMBER OF CRIMES IN EASTern Metro Manila shrank last year—but only slightly—compared to 2005, according to police records.

There were 1,181 index crimes reported in the Eastern Police District last year, compared to 1,225 recorded cases in 2005, records from the police district showed.

Index crimes refer to crimes against persons, including murder, homicide, physical injuries and rape, as well as to crimes against property, including theft and robbery cases.

The EPD covers San Juan town and the cities of Marikina, Pasig and Mandaluyong.

The Marikina City Police also reported a lower crime rate in 2006 compared to 2005. But the city remains the most crime prone area in the eastern metropolis, according to crime statistics from the district police in the second half of 2006.

DID YOU KNOW

THE PHILIPPINE National Bank, the country's de facto Central Bank until 1949, was created by the legislature on Feb. 4, 1916. It was formally established on July 22, 1916 at the old Masonic Temple on Escolta, then the "Wall Street of the Philippines," in Manila.

Before the creation of the Central Bank in 1949, the PNB issued currency notes, served as custodian of bank reserves and was the depository of government funds as well as the clearinghouse of the banking system.

In 1995, the bank moved to its new headquarters on Roxas Boulevard, Pasay City. The following year, the Securities and Exchange Commission approved its conversion into a private corporation, with government control reduced to 46 percent. The PNB now has more than two million depositors.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Cop linked to abduction given deadline to give up

By Alcuin Papa

A TRAFFIC POLICE OFFICER ACCUSED of kidnapping another police official in Quezon City last week has been given until the end of the month to give himself up or face administrative and criminal charges.

Chief Supt. Errol Pan, chief of the Traffic Management Group (TMG), yesterday said he has formed a team to go after Supt. Rodrigo Bonifacio.

Bonifacio, TMG administrative officer, was accused of kidnapping Chief Insp. Medel Poñe of the National Capital Region Police at the house of Genevie Winters at Mira-Nila Subdivision in Quezon City on Feb. 1.

Senior Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, Quezon City Police District (QCPD) chief and Supt. Franklin Mabanag, QCPD Criminal Investigation Unit head, said a "love triangle" could have triggered the kidnapping.

Chief Insp. Jack Malinao of the QC Criminal Investigation and Detection Group said that Poñe was dragged by Bonifacio and other men into Winters' vehicle on Feb. 1. The vehicle was returned the following day and Scene of the Crime operatives who examined it found bloodstains inside.

"We are trying to establish the residence of Bonifacio and his possible hideouts," Malinao said.

He added that any information on the whereabouts of Poñe or Bonifacio can be relayed to him at 4341987 and 4336799.

DR. PETER K. L. Ng of the Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Studies in Singapore shows another newly discovered marine species found off Panglao island—a rare crustacean of the Homolidae Family. PHOTOS BY EDWIN BACASMAS

New marine species . . . From page A17

tailed marine biodiversity map of Bohol Sea was important because it would add a new dimension to the knowledge about the Bohol Sea's marine biology.

During the turnover, some 50 samples or "holotype" specimens of the newly found species were placed in the care of the National Museum.

"If future scientists need to check the identity of a specie (perhaps using new characters or new technologies), or suspect that the known species is mixed or have any doubts, etc., the holotype is the final determinant. As such, holotypes are required to be kept in museums or reputable institutions where they must be available to scientists worldwide," the research team explained.

The Panglao 2005 expedition, a P5.4-million project, was sponsored by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute, National Museum of Natural History in Paris, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National University of Singapore, and Total Corporate Foundation.

DR. PHILIPPE Bouchet of the National Museum of Natural History in Paris points to the area where a team of researchers conducted the Panglao Marine Biodiversity Project.

GUIDO Poppe, another member of the research team, presents to media a rare seashell of the Slit shell family (scientific name: *Pleurotomariidae bayerotrochus philpoppei*) which was turned over to the National Museum.

GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM
Financial Center, Pasay City, Metro Manila 1308

February 5, 2007

ADVISORY TO ALL ATTORNEYS-IN-FACT/HOLDERS OF SPECIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY OF OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORSHIP PENSIONERS RESIDING IN THE USA

In March 2007, GSIS will be launching the GSIS Wireless Automated Processing Systems (GW@PS), initially in the consular offices of Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Chicago. This will allow the electronic registration of old-age and survivorship pensioners residing in these areas and the subsequent issuance of the GSIS eCard Plus to which monthly pensions of these pensioners will be credited.

To effectively implement the electronic registration, please provide us with the following information:

RETIREE/PENSIONER (Surname, First Name, M.I.)	ADDRESS ABROAD	EMAIL ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.	CELLPHONE NO.

ATTORNEY-IN-FACT (Surname, First Name, M.I.)	ADDRESS IN THE PHILIPPINES	EMAIL ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.	CELLPHONE NO.

May we request you to please return the duly accomplished form on or before February 9, 2007 through fax no. (632) 891-6015 or via email to fmjavillo@gsis.gov.ph.

Your utmost cooperation will be highly appreciated. Thank you.

(Sgd.) WENCESLAO O. NIÑONUEVO III
Vice President – Social Insurance Operations Office II

GMA can't live down the Sulu infamy

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

THE GOVERNMENT LOST FACE IN SULU when it gave in to the demands of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) in exchange for the release of a two-star Marine general and an undersecretary who were held hostage for two days.

In the eyes of the international community, the Macapagal-Arroyo administration is a weakling.

What were the MNLF's demands? One was the payment of cash to the families of Moro rebels who were killed in an encounter with Marine troops going after Abu Sayyaf terrorists days earlier.

The other was for the preparatory tripartite talks to push through in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in March, involving the government, the MNLF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

But the most important—but not publicized—MNLF demand that was met was the alleged forthcoming release of MNLF chair Nur Misuari from detention. Misuari is currently detained on rebellion charges.

The government is trying to cover up Misuari's impending release by saying he's being considered to represent the MNLF in the tripartite talks. The Arroyo government is taking the Filipino people for idiots by announcing that it was still studying the "possibility" of releasing Misuari.

* * *

In a telephone conversation last week, President George W. Bush praised GMA, who was attending an international conference in Davos, Switzerland, for winning the war against local terrorists.

Bush spoke too soon. Our government surrendered to the Sulu terrorists without a single shot over the weekend.

Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo won't be able to live down that infamy.

* * *

For all his faults, deposed President Joseph "Erap" Estrada would not have capitulated to the MNLF in the two-day hostage drama.

Knowing Erap, he would have ordered the bombing of the MNLF camp and unleashed the "dogs of war," the Marines, to spring their two-star general from detention.

Another secessionist group, the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF), got a taste of Erap's "*siga-siga*" (tough guy) mentality when its camp was captured by government troops during a war Erap declared against the Moro group.

Do you still wonder why many soldiers don't have an iota of respect for their woman Commander-in-chief?

* * *

The Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG) filed recently with the Sandiganbayan a case seeking the sequestration of all the assets of beer and tobacco magnate Lucio Tan for allegedly being owned by deposed dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The case has been rehashed from an old one the Sandiganbayan dismissed last year. The dismissal is being appealed by the PCGG in the Supreme Court. The PCGG is making it appear that the sequestration order is a new case, when in fact it's not.

Is it a coincidence that the filing of the rehashed sequestration case comes during the election period? If it's not a coincidence, then it's a bare-faced shakedown!

* * *

A Court of Appeals justice pretends to be honest and refuses to allow any follow-ups on pending cases in his office. However, he allegedly has a "bagman" from Laguna, a judge, who deals with his wife.

If you had a case pending in this justice's division and were lucky enough to make the contact, our source said you can even write the decision yourself.

Hyundai boss gets 3 years for bribe fund

CHUNG AP

SEOUL—THE HEAD OF SOUTH Korea's largest automaker Hyundai Motor was Monday sentenced to three years in prison for creating a multimillion-dollar slush fund to bribe politicians and officials.

Chung Mong-koo, 68, was found guilty of breach of trust and of embezzling around 90 billion won ($96 million) through fraudulent accounting, in what a Seoul court called a "clear-cut criminal act."

Chung, one of the country's richest men, remains free pending an appeal.

"Obviously we are greatly disappointed by the court's ruling and it is Chairman Chung's intention to file an appeal," Hyundai said in a statement.

His lawyers had urged leniency, saying putting him behind bars could do further damage to the Hyundai auto group—the world's sixth-largest automaker—and hurt the national economy.

The group, which includes affiliate Kia Motors, controls 70 percent of the domestic auto market and accounts for 5.4 percent of South Korea's gross domestic product.

But chief judge Kim Dong-oh said Chung's behavior had dealt a blow to corporate self-regulation.

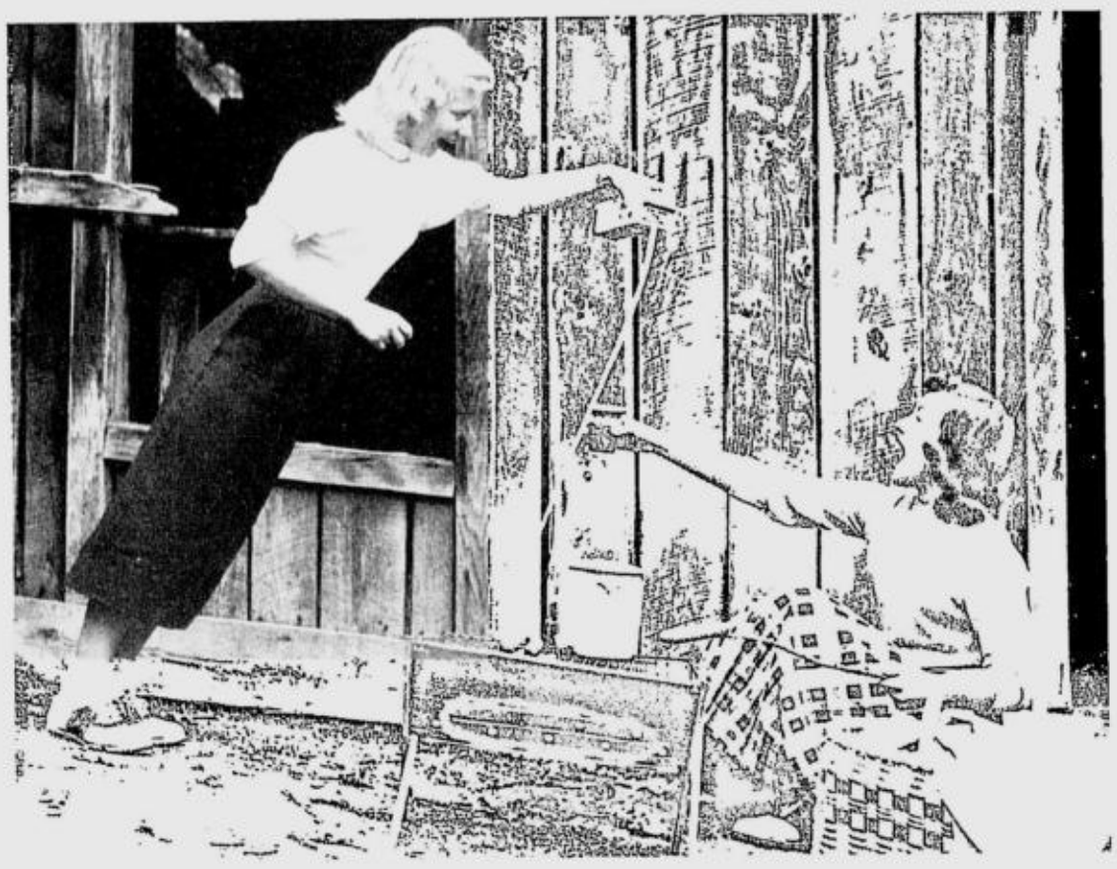
"The court cannot help but sternly hold him responsible," the judge said. "Wrong customs must be eradicated to make the South Korean economy advanced."

It passed suspended jail terms on three other Hyundai Motor executives, including vice chairman Kim Dong-jin, saying they were just following Chung's instructions.

A stony-faced Chung refused comment as he left the court but a Hyundai spokesperson described the sentence as "so harsh."

South Korea launched a drive to rein in its all-powerful conglomerates, or chaebol, after the 1997-98 financial crisis. But even so, high-profile business leaders have in the past received sentences seen as lenient.

Activist Park Kun-yong called the sentence light compared to the prosecution's demand for six years. *AFP*



THIS 1957 publicity photo provided by the Wisconsin Historical Society shows milk seemingly being poured at an angle demonstrating the "mystery" of The Wonder Spot in Lake Delton, Wis. AP

US Wonder Spot about to disappear

LAKE DELTON, WISCONSIN—AFTER more than half a century of impressing tourists, the Wonder Spot, a mysterious cabin where people cannot stand up straight, water runs uphill and chairs balance on two legs, is no more.

Owner Bill Carney has sold the iconic attraction to the village of Lake Delton for $300,000 (euro232,000). The village wants to build a road through the place where the Wonder Spot has stood since the 1950s.

"We're kind of wondering how the town is going to deal with the gravitational forces under the road," joked Doug Kirby, publisher of RoadsideAmerica.com, which catalogues odd tourist attractions.

Kirby's site lists the Wonder Spot as one of 21 so-called "mystery spots," also called "gravity vortexes."

The story behind each one is similar—gravity doesn't work in them. People seem to grow smaller, can't stand up straight and can barely walk.

Promotions boast that strange forces in the spots trump the laws of physics. Others say they're just elaborate hoaxes.

"It seems like to spend a lot of scientific effort to debunk these places you're just sucking the fun out of a tourist attraction a lot of people enjoy," Kirby said.

The Wonder Spot lies just off US Highway 12, a corridor packed with water parks, giant resorts, museums, hotels and restaurants. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Britain gasses tens of thousands of turkeys

HOLTON, England—Britain gassed tens of thousands of turkeys and extended restrictions on the movement of poultry to try to prevent the spread of deadly bird flu from a farm in eastern England. United Nations officials said they were not surprised by the outbreak of H5N1 avian influenza and said they have been expecting the virus to spread during the colder winter months, much as it did last year. Britain's Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs or Defra issued a statement on Sunday saying it appeared the virus had been confined to the Bernard Matthews farm near the town of Lowestoft. More than 150,000 turkeys were slaughtered at the farm starting on Saturday. Dr. David Nabarro, the United Nations bird flu envoy, said Europe should be ready for more outbreaks. He said the fowl were likely to have been infected by wild birds, which can carry the virus without becoming sick. *Reuters*

Indonesia floods kill 20, leave 200,000 homeless

JAKARTA—Floods in the Indonesian capital have killed at least 20 people and made nearly 200,000 homeless, with the deluge of muddy brown water up to 4 meters deep in some areas, officials said on Sunday. Downpours over Jakarta weakened at the weekend, but heavy rain in upland areas sent more water into already swollen rivers criss-crossing the low-lying city. Floods are common in Indonesia during the rainy season, but the devastation of recent days has been the worst in five years, and meteorology officials have warned that the city could suffer another week of heavy rains. Officials are also concerned that the displacement of so many people and water contamination could bring disease in a city already struggling with a surge in cases of dengue fever. *Reuters*

Taliban commander behind Afghan town takeover killed

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan—A Nato air strike killed a Taliban commander behind an insurgent takeover of a small southern Afghanistan town Sunday as a US general took command of the 35,000-strong Nato-led force. A Taliban spokesperson said meanwhile the fighters were ready to "hand over" the town of of Musa Qala, which they captured overnight Friday, if the government and foreign forces agreed "they won't bomb again." Mullah Abdul Ghafour and "some of his aides" were killed in the strike near the town in the province of Helmand, the interior ministry said in a statement that described the death as a "major achievement." The International Security Assistance Force (Isaf) did not immediately release the name of the slain insurgent but said he was "directly responsible" for the "uprising" in Musa Qala. Taliban fighters attacked the town late Thursday, disarming police and occupying the district administration headquarters. They appeared to still be in the town Sunday. A police officer in hiding after Taliban captured the town also told AFP the dead man was Ghafour, one of four top Taliban commanders in the area. *AFP*

More US kids exposed to online pornography

CHICAGO—MORE CHILDREN and teens are being exposed to online pornography, mostly by accidentally viewing sexually explicit websites while surfing the Internet, researchers say.

Forty-two percent of Internet users aged 10 to 17 surveyed said they had seen online pornography in the past year. Of those, 66 percent said they did not want to view the images and had not sought them out, University of New Hampshire researchers found. Their conclusions appear in February's Pediatrics, due out Monday.

"You've really taken away the age of innocence," said Dr. Michael Wasserman, a pediatrician in Louisiana who was not involved in the study.

Online pornography was defined in the study as images of naked people or people having sex.

"It's so common now, who hasn't seen something like that?" said Emily Duhovny, 17.

The high school senior said X-rated images pop up all the time when she is online. Duhovny said the first time she saw one, it was shocking, but now, "more than anything, it's just annoying."

"It doesn't have to be a negative thing, but that shouldn't be how you learn about sex education," said Duhovny, an editor for Sexetc.org, a teen-written website on sexual health issues affiliated with Rutgers University. *AP*

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Iran bluster looks larger than its nuclear expertise

Tehran's program characterized by many setbacks

AFTER DECADES OF LARGELY CLANDESTINE EFFORTS, Iran is expected to declare in coming days that it has made a huge leap toward industrial-scale production of enriched uranium—a defiant act that the country's leaders will herald as a major technical stride and its neighbors will denounce as a looming threat.

But for now, many nuclear experts say, the frenetic activity at the desert enrichment plant in Natanz may be mostly about political showmanship.

The many setbacks and outright failures of Tehran's experimental program suggest that its bluster may far outstrip its technical expertise. And the problems help explain US intelligence estimates that Iran is at least four years away from producing a bomb.

After weeks of limited access inside Iran, inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency have reported that Tehran has succeeded in manufacturing parts for about 3,000 centrifuges, the devices that can spin uranium into reactor fuel—or bomb fuel. In recent days, the Iranians have begun installing the machines and supporting gear in a cavernous plant at Natanz, which would be a potential target if the United States or one of its allies decided that diplomacy would never keep Iran from getting the bomb.

To enrich uranium on an industrial scale, the machines must spin at incredibly high speeds for months on end. But the latest report of the atomic agency, issued in November, said the primitive machines of Iran's pilot plant ran only intermittently, to enrich small amounts of uranium. And the Iranians succeeded in setting up just two of the planned six groupings of 164 centrifuges at the pilot plant.

"It looks political unless they've made progress that we don't know about," said Mark Fitzpatrick, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, a weapons analysis group in London.

If Iran's latest move proves successful, in open defiance of a UN Security Council demand that it suspend all enrichment activity, nuclear experts outside the US government, including Fitzpatrick, say that in the worst case, it could yield fuel for an atom bomb in two or three years, faster than US intelligence has suggested.

There also appear to be large doses of domestic political posturing and outright bluffing to Iran's very public declarations. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who has become the face of Iranian defiance, is under growing pressure at home because of unemployment and the effect of economic sanctions—and President Bush's advisers have said he may view a nuclear standoff with the United States as a way to help his standing. *NYT*

CHURCH IN CHINA HARBIN REUTERS

People walk past St. Sophia Church in Harbin in China's Heilongjiang province, in this January 2007 photo. It may be cold in Harbin, which is nearer to Siberia than to Beijing, but warming ties between Russia and China propel the city into rediscovering its Russian roots.

US illegals' DNA to be collected under new law

THE JUSTICE DEPARTMENT IS finishing rules to allow a vast expansion of DNA gathering that will include most people arrested or detained by federal authorities, a move that would affect hundreds of thousands of illegal immigrants each year, officials said.

The new forensic DNA sampling was authorized by Congress in a little-noticed amendment to a January 2006 renewal of the Violence Against Women Act, which provides protections and assistance for victims of sexual crimes. The amendment permits DNA collecting from anyone under criminal arrest by federal authorities, and also from illegal immigrants detained by federal agents—by far the largest group to be affected by the new law.

Over the last year, the Justice Department has been conducting an internal review and consulting with other agencies to prepare regulations to carry out the law.

The new law has strong support from crime victims' organizations and some women's groups, who say it will help law enforcement identify sexual predators and detect dangerous criminals among illegal immigrants.

"Obviously, the bigger the DNA database, the better," said Lynn Parrish, the spokesperson for Rape, Abuse and Incest National Network, based in Washington. "If this had been implemented years ago, it could have prevented many crimes. Rapists are generalists. They don't just rape, they also murder."

Immigration lawyers said they did not learn of the measure when it passed last year and were dismayed by its sweeping scope.

"This has taken us by storm," said Deborah Notkin, a lawyer who was president in 2006 of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. "It's so broad, it's scary. It is a terrible thing to do because people are sometimes detained erroneously in the immigration system."

The goal, justice officials said, is to make the practice of DNA sampling as routine as fingerprinting for anyone detained by federal agents, including illegal immigrants. Until now, federal authorities have taken DNA samples only from convicted felons. *NYT*

Mortars kill 15 in Baghdad after deadly bombing

BAGHDAD—MORTAR BOMBS KILLED 15 PEOPLE IN A Sunni neighborhood in Baghdad on Sunday in fresh violence after a truck bomb killed 135 people in a Shiite area in the worst single bombing since the US-led 2003 invasion.

The spiraling sectarian bloodshed threw the spotlight on Shiite Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's planned crackdown in Baghdad, but a US general warned it would not produce results overnight and said reinforcements were still being deployed.

US officers told a group of reporters the US-Iraqi campaign to stabilize Baghdad would begin soon and said the offensive would be on a scale never seen in four years of war.

The mortar rounds crashed down in the northern Adhamiya district as clashes were reported between gunmen and police in religiously mixed Amil district, police said. Details were sketchy but Adhamiya is frequently subjected to mortar barrages.

More than 20 people were reported killed elsewhere in Baghdad in bomb attacks and drive-by shootings and police found 42 bodies of apparent sectarian execution-style killings.

As pressure piled on Maliki to halt a descent into all-out civil war, the US military spokesperson urged patience.

"It is important to acknowledge that it will not turn the security situation overnight," Maj. Gen. William Caldwell said of the Baghdad plan, announced in January.

"People must be patient. Give the government and coalition forces a chance to fully implement it. It will take some time for additional Iraqi and US forces to be deployed," he said.

Three American colonels who are senior advisers to the Iraqi army and police in Baghdad said a command center overseeing the crackdown would be activated on Monday.

"The expectation is the plan will be implemented soon thereafter," Col. Doug Heckman, senior adviser to the 9th Iraqi Army division, said at a US military base in Baghdad. *Reuters*

N. Korea seeks oil for halting nuke plant

TOKYO—NORTH KOREA'S TOP nuclear envoy has told former US officials Pyongyang wants more than half a million tons of fuel oil a year in return for suspending its atomic reactor, a Japanese daily said on Sunday.

Shutting down North Korea's sole operating reactor would be a good first step when six-country discussions on ending the North's nuclear weapons program resume in Beijing on Thursday, South Korea's envoy to the talks said.

The Asahi Shimbun daily said North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye-gwan had set out Pyongyang's position when he met former US State Department official Joel Witt and nuclear expert David Albright in the North Korean capital last week.

The demand would exceed the energy assistance received by the impoverished communist state under a 1994 deal with Washington, which collapsed when the current nuclear crisis began in 2002.

Kim and other North Korean officials said the country would halt the operation of its reactor at Yongbyon if it obtained energy assistance equivalent to more than 500,000 tons of fuel oil a year, the Asahi said, quoting the two Americans.

"As a first step, it is important to get the facility shut down," South Korean nuclear envoy Chun Yung-woo told reporters.

North Korean officials also demanded that Washington lift its financial sanctions against the North as well as removing it from the list of "terrorism-sponsoring" nations, the daily said.

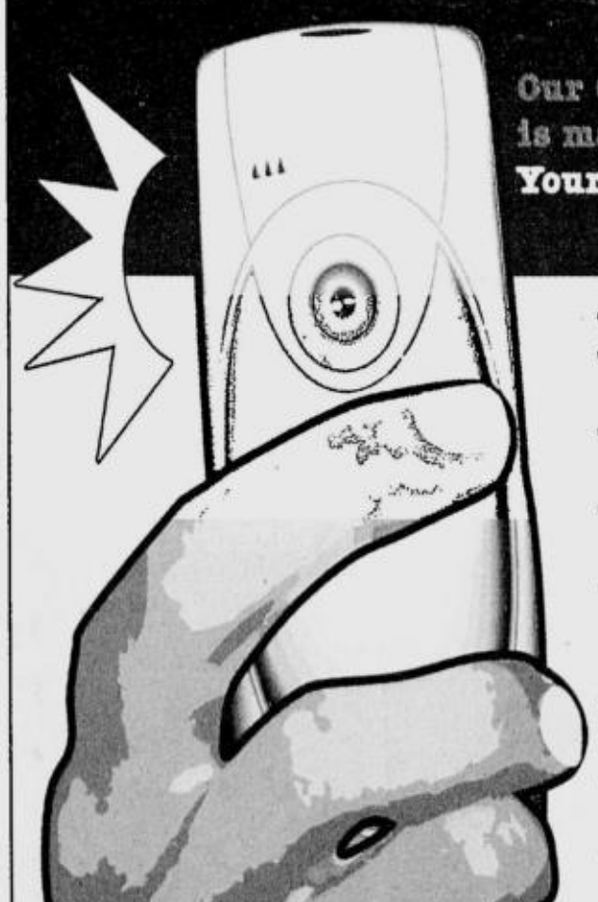
Kim was likely to have made the demands to US counterpart Christopher Hill at unprecedented meetings the two men held in Berlin last month, but might have decided to reiterate them to seek concessions when the six-party talks resume, Asahi said. *Reuters*

GYPSY DANCER

Catrina, a 2-year-old Romanian gypsy girl, dances while holding money during a gypsy beauty contest in Bucharest, Romania, Feb. 4. Romania, which joined the European Union this year, is home to a large gypsy community. AP

METRO

Citizen's Call



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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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SPORTS

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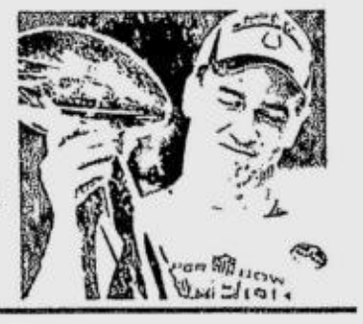
- **Indianapolis** Colts rule Super Bowl /A24



Fiba readies lifting of RP ban

Unified BAP-SBP only needs POC recognition, says sec gen Baumann

By June Navarro

IT IS DONE—EXCEPT for the forthcoming recognition from the Philippine Olympic Committee.

Philippine basketball finally achieved unity yesterday as the major stakeholders of the sport completed the final requirement of the Tokyo agreement to pave the way for the lifting of the country's suspension from the International Basketball Federation (Fiba).

No less than Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann was on hand when basketball's Unity Congress elected the officials of the country's new basketball body, which will be known as Basketball Association of the Philippines-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas.

All that is needed now is the BAP-SBP accreditation from the Philippine Olympic Committee. The new cage body will then transmit the POC stamp of approval to the Fiba along with the key documents that led to the formation of the new organization.

"The lifting of the suspension is now dependent on your internal process," Baumann declared. "We are now just awaiting your new federation's accreditation from the POC."

"It's done," said BAP-SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan.

"I'm relieved, but also worried because of the big task ahead of us," he added, referring to the tall order of getting the national team back on its feet.

POC vice president Monico Puentevella, who represented POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco Jr., said the Olympic body would schedule an executive board meeting in preparation for the general assembly, as soon as the SBP formally seeks recognition.

"Once the accreditation is ensured, it's just a matter of receiving the letter and sending it back," said Baumann.

The clincher, Baumann stressed, was the decision of both BAP and SBP officials to seek his guidance in Bangkok over the weekend.

Pangilinan, who announced the dissolution of the three-man panel which gave birth to the BAP-SBP, said emphasis will now be on the participation of the national team in the Olympic qualifier.

The national team needs to see action in the Southeast Asian Basketball Association championships, scheduled in May, to qualify for the Fiba-Asia Championships in July where the top two finalists get slots in the 2008 Beijing Olympics.

The BAP-SBP's 25-man board of trustees also designated Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte Sr. as chair, PBA chair Ricky Vargas as vice chair, lawyer Marievic Anonuevo as secretary and Christian Tan as treasurer.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada will serve as special adviser to the board, while lawyer Bonifacio Alentajan was named legal counsel of the fledgling organization.

The key position of executive director was left vacant.

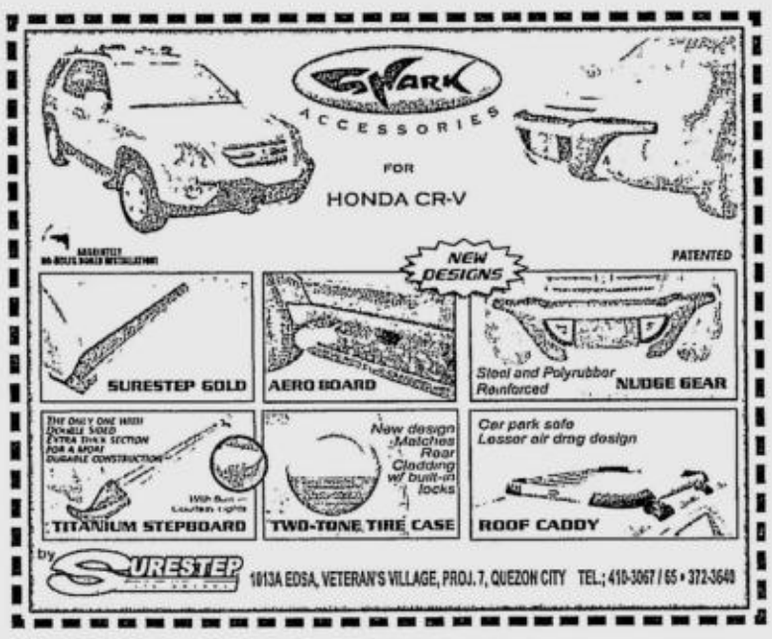
"We will name the executive director as soon as practical," said Pangilinan, who broached the idea of appointing a neutral official or designating a foreigner to the position.

Representing the geographical sector of the board of trustees were Raul Alcoseba, Alentajan, Pedro Alfaro Jr., Rey Baula, Elmer Cabahug, Fr. Paul De Vera, Tony Fabico, Graham Lim, Joey Lina and Danny Soria.

Former PBA chair Ely Capacio, Red Bull manager Tony Chua, PBA commissioner Noli Eala and Vargas will represent the professional sector, while Air21 president Lito Alvarez, Michele Lhuillier and PBL commissioner Chino Trinidad will be their counterparts in the commercial sector.

More stories on the congress on A22

FIBA secretary general Patrick Baumann (center) joins hands with (from left) Bernie Atienza, Go Teng Kok, Manny Pangilinan and Sen. Jinggoy Estrada after BAP-SBP was formed. INQUIRER PHOTO / JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN



YOUR PROBLEM:

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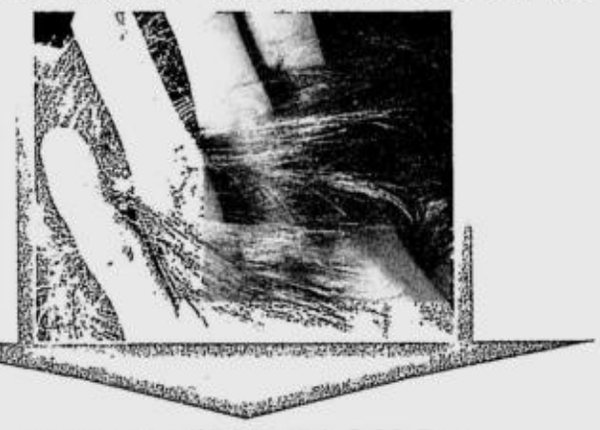

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Miñoza zooms to 2nd in Asia Order of Merit

By Musong R. Castillo

FEELING GOOD: Frankie Miñoza. ROMY HOMILLADA

WITH A SECOND PHILIPPINE OPEN TROPHY tucked away, Frankie Miñoza hopes to also figure in the mix prominently as he pursues one of his busiest international schedules in years.

"I will play in 30 to 32 tournaments this year, both in the Asian and Japanese Tours," Miñoza told reporters in Filipino on Sunday afternoon after completing a two-stroke victory over countryman Gerald Rosales in Asia's oldest national championship.

"I feel great and I don't feel that old at all," Miñoza told the INQUIRER.

At 47, Miñoza became the second oldest to win the Open after the revered Celestino Tugot, his neighbor and idol in Del Monte, Bukidnon, who pulled off the feat at age 51 in 1966.

Also the 1998 winner at Riviera, Miñoza bared that he has started a physical conditioning regimen to help him cope with the everyday grind in the Tour.

"I lift weights almost everyday. *Kailangan na natin para* (I now need it) to stay in shape and be competitive every week," Miñoza said.

"That's how golf is in the world today—you need to practice not only in the driving ranges and fairways, but in the gym as well."

With his first-place check of $47,550, Miñoza moved up to second in the Asian Tour Order of Merit after three legs with total earnings of $55,250, behind China's Liang Wenchong.

Liang, who placed third in the Open, showed the way with earnings of $64,940 which was boosted by a $46,460 payday in the recent $2.2 million Qatar Masters where he was joint ninth.

Also moving up was Rosales, now in fifth with $34,972 after winning $32,550 Sunday.

PBA summons Guiao, San Miguel coaches

By Musong R. Castillo

FIERY RED BULL COACH YENG GUIAO AND San Miguel Beer assistant mentors Pido Jarencio and Biboy Ravanes have been summoned by the PBA Commissioner's Office today to explain their part in the ruckus that marred Sunday's Barako-Beermen Game 6 semifinal clash.

All three were assessed technical fouls, with Guiao getting ejected late in the second quarter of the Talk 'N Text Philippine Cup match because it was his second technical for the game.

League sources said that fines could be levied after a thorough review of the game tape and all sides have been heard.

Guiao had been fined P65,000 earlier in the season after also getting into an altercation with Talk 'N Text team manager Frankie Lim, who was slapped a P50,000 fine.

Red Bull officials wondered why Guiao was ejected when it was clear that Jarencio and Ravanes were the ones who made their way to the Red Bull bench to confront Guiao.

Replays of the tape clearly showed Jarencio in the Red Bull side of the bench and warding off a game official who tried to pacify him.

The commotion took place after Guiao bumped into San Miguel guard Dondon Hontiveros.

"We don't condone wrongdoing of our players and even our coach," said Red Bull board representative Tony Chua. "But it looks like we got the raw end of the deal here. We were attacked and our coach was the one ejected."

"I never understood why I got two technical fouls," said Guiao. "Hontiveros was bumping into me, I protected myself and he did a good job overacting. Then they rushed onto us."

Gie Abanilla called the shots for the remainder of the game won by the Barako, 104-100, after Celino Cruz provided all the heroics to forge a seventh and deciding game tomorrow at 7 p.m. also at the Araneta Coliseum in Cubao.

Guiao insisted that his team has never gotten any breaks from the referees in the series.

"*Pakiusap ko lang sa mga nagmamahal sa* PBA, *bantayan nila ang tawagan*, (I appeal to all PBA fans to take a real serious look into the officiating)," said Guiao.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Ort/Tri) —Gelay's Charm (5), Real Material (2), Happy Again (4), Epic Energy (3)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Dondon's Entry (6), Hurry Prince (8), Letshaveaparty (5), Modern Classic (3), Daddy's Girl (11)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Regal Chief (4), Runnin Rebel (5), Western Champ (6), Hot Stuff (7)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Red Bells (5), Hepburn (4), Binukalan's Pride (3), West N Wild (7), Graceful Conqueror (1)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Strong Red (8), Spark (2), Hazit Coming (1), Money Man (3), Bombshell Beauty (5)
Race 6—Bumble Bee (11), Ferrarione (10), Clear Stone (1), Batangas Force (8), Lord Elgene (9)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Andorra (2), Hok Kee Hok (14), Sheza Winner (6), Ingay Ingay (10), Hidalgo (11)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Ginja (6), Top Most (2), Aya's Dream (1), Desert Breeze (11), Dancing Slew (3), Latin Music (9)

RP quintet will get all it needs, says MVP

FIBA secretary general Patrick Baumann

By Francis Ochoa

THE FIRST DECLARATION THAT MANNY V. PANGILINAN MADE WHEN he emerged from the executive board meeting of the Basketball Association of the Philippines-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas was that he was giving the national team an open checkbook to finance its bid for an Olympic berth.

"Whatever they need—training, budget, whatever—I think we should give our all-out support to the national team," said Pangilinan, the PLDT chief.

"Frankly, I will try to persuade the PLDT Foundation to help out and of course, myself personally," he added, when asked where the funds will come from.

"We will also solicit help from the private sector. We want this to be a broad-based support for the team."

Pangilinan doesn't know how much will be actually spent but he had a peek at the budget national coach Chot Reyes proposed and said "it is rather comprehensive."

Those side comments were just part of the many sidelights in yesterday's Unity Congress at the Dusit Hotel, which included laid-back comments from a Patrick Baumann who looked far more relaxed compared to the last and only time he was in the country—where he also mediated in a basketball war that was actually the ancestor to this one.

"But it's a pleasure," Baumann, the influential international basketball federation (Fiba) secretary general, said of his role of stepping in to help the country every time a crisis pops up.

"If it serves the purpose of having basketball played on the court, then this is my role and my duty and I have to do it," Baumann said.

Baumann jovial during the press conference, even citing his wishes now that the basketball impasse finally came to an end.

Chot: We're nowhere near an Olympic slot

AND NOW FOR THE HARD PART; A little rain on the parade.

For all the pageantry and air of unity that cloaked yesterday's Unity Congress, there was a little footnote that should serve as some sort of a reality check to temper the public's grand hoop dreams.

While the congress was a good first step to putting order in the country's fractured basketball structure, it did not, in any way, move the Philippines closer to an Olympic slot.

"We're nowhere near," said Chot Reyes, the national team head coach tasked by the fledgling BAP-SBP to steer the country to an Olympic participation in Beijing next year.

"It's so far, it's not even funny."

"Let's be honest, let's be realistic," said PBA commissioner Noli Eala, the designated spokesperson of the new federation. "But whether this is actually the right formula, the cure-all for every basketball problem in the country … we cannot say just yet."

Even Manny V. Pangilinan admits it will take guts to take a step backward to help improve the local sport.

"We have to be patient," he said. "The problems of basketball isn't going to be fixed overnight. It's going to take a really determined effort to improve Philippine basketball." *Francis Ochoa*

Players f on for na

By Jasmine W. Payo

FROM BASKETBALL STARS TO cheerleaders. Players young and old came in full force to support—and add glamour—to yesterday's crucial Unity Congress.

Here are their sentiments:

"Finally there's light. This is for the future of basketball. It's an answered prayer. We saw humility from everybody. I hope this continues because fans now long to watch the Philippine team. This is the chance for us to move forward." *—Alvin Patrimonio*

"I'm very happy. The qualifying for the Seaba, that's the most important thing. If we don't make it there, our dream of making it to the Olympics, all the effort and sacrifices, will come to naught. But we're getting support. Everyone's praying that we achieve our goal of making it to the Olympics." *—Allan Caidic*

"We're all very excited and looking forward to just play again. We discontinued practice because of the suspension. We haven't played together and

Swift approv

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION of the Philippines-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas is assured of getting "express lane" treatment when it applies for Philippine Olympic Committee membership.

It would take only 10 days for the BAP-SBP to formally get POC recognition as the new basketball associa-

It's not just fuel.
It's fulfilling the desire to evolve and improve. Shell

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(left) confers with BAP-SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

GTK out of BAP, as promised

By Marc Anthony Reyes

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED.

Basketball Association of the Philippines president Go Teng Kok said he has no regrets stepping down immediately from his post after the two-year-old basketball crisis ended with the election of officers of the BAP-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas yesterday.

In effect, Go served shortest as BAP head. He became the fourth BAP chief in a span of just 18 months last Jan. 27 and held it for just nine days.

"I have no regrets because it was mission accomplished," Go told the INQUIRER. "I'm sticking to my word that I will step down after this (basketball controversy) is resolved and I promised my mom in her death bed to do that."

Go, whose mother died over the weekend, said he was even offered the post of the BAP-SBP chair but politely declined it. He instead endorsed Rep. Luis Villafuerte Sr. to the position.

NO REGRETS: Go Teng Kok

"I'm totally out of basketball," said Go. "What is important is that unity was achieved."

The controversial official said he was pleased that the Fiba (international basketball federation) recognized his administration when it honored the letter of authority—he was represented by BAP EVP Christian Tan and legal counsel Bonifacio Alentajan—which he sent to Fiba officials over the weekend in Bangkok.

"They didn't want to talk to anybody (in the BAP) but me, but they honored the letter of authority I faxed them," added Go.

Storm before the calm

APRIL, 2005– Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) president Jose Cojuangco demands the Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP) to overhaul the national pool after it lost to Parañaque Jets, a team of movie actors and former pros, in a National Basketball Conference preseason tournament.

Later, in planning for the Southeast Asian Basketball Association (Seaba) meet, POC and BAP disagree on the composition of the national team.

May 17–Continued disputes prompt Cojuangco to recommend the suspension of the BAP.

The POC general assembly later unanimously voted for the indefinite suspension of the BAP.

June 8–Despite its suspension, the BAP installs former Interior Secretary Joey Lina as its new president, replacing Quinteliano Literal. Lina appeals for the lifting of the BAP suspension.

June 30–POC rejects Lina's appeal and expels the BAP.

July 4–Following BAP's expulsion, the international basketball federation (Fiba) bars the Philippines from competing in Fiba-sanctioned international events. BAP asks for a temporary permit from the POC to represent the country in the Southeast Asia Basketball Association (Seaba) tournament, but Cojuangco rejects the request. Seaba also freezes the country's participation in the tournament.

Sept. 29–POC and Fiba sign a memorandum of understanding for the formation of a new basketball federation to replace the BAP. Under the agreement, the new federation must include at least five major stakeholders: PBA, UAAP, PBL, NCAA and Lina. The agreement sets the deadline on March 31, 2006.

November–Fiba prevents POC from organizing any basketball event at the 23rd Southeast Asian Games.

January, 2006–POC officials start meeting with Lina and the heads of the PBA, PBL, UAAP and NCAA.

March–Lina excludes himself from stakeholders' meetings, saying he cannot attend meetings aimed at the destruction of the organization he leads. Lina says that to lift the Fiba suspension, the solution is to amend and restructure only the BAP constitution and by-laws and have it reinstated by the POC.

April–Pilipinas Basketball (PB), the new cage body backed by the POC and four stakeholders (except Lina), fails to get the nod of Fiba.

August–BAP and PB sign a joint communiqué in Tokyo creating three-man panel for the launching of a unified Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP). The panel is composed of Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. chair Manny Pangilinan, PB president Bernie Atienza and Lina. Fiba assures the lifting of suspension once the SBP takes off.

Oct. 11–Sen. Jinggoy Estrada takes over the BAP leadership, while Lina becomes a member of the SBP board of trustees.

December–Estrada and Pangilinan finally agree in a meeting in Hong Kong to push SBP. They also agree that Estrada will be SBP chair while Pangilinan will be SBP president. They also name PBA chair Ricky Vargas as SBP vice chair.

Jan. 7, 2007– BAP fires Estrada as president for striking a deal with Pangilinan without consulting the organization. Following Estrada's ouster, some BAP officials defect to SBP for the sake of unity. Estrada is later replaced by Go Teng Kok.

Jan. 18–Estrada, Pangilinan, Vargas and PBA Commissioner Noli Eala meet with Fiba executives in Switzerland to report on the SBP initiatives for unification, among which is the Unity Congress for members of the basketball community on Feb. 5.

Feb. 3–Pangilinan and Eala meet with BAP officials, who agree to attend the Unity Congress. *Lawrence de Guzman, Inquirer Research*

Prayer: Let's get it tional team's sake

PATRIMONIO

CAIDIC

SEIGLE

it's really important that we're able to get this done and start over again." —*Danny Seigle, San Miguel*

"It's long overdue. It's about time to move forward. We're happy about this, it's the light at the end of the tunnel. Everything is finally settled. I'm here to show support and if coach Chot needs me—to be activated to the national team—I'm just here." —*Asi Taulava, Talk 'N Text*

"We're very excited about it. Coming from a player's standpoint, especially the young players aspiring to make it to the national team. It's our number one sport, so we should be represented internationally. This is the first step, a lot of work has to be done." —*Macky Escalona, Ateneo Blue Eagles*

"Sana magtuloy-tuloy na (I hope this effort succeeds), we're willing to represent the country, we're all excited. We're more than willing to play." —*Ren-Ren Ritualo, Talk 'N Text*

'al for BAP-SBP assured

tion, according to POC spokesperson Joey Romasanta yesterday.

Frank Elizalde, the International Olympic Committee representative to the Philippines, also wants the POC to convene the general assembly at once and recognize the new group.

"The POC should recognize them (BAP-SBP) as soon as possible," said Elizalde, who attended the Unity Congress at the Dusit Hotel.

"I assume the POC will call a special meeting because we only meet as a group once a month," he added.

Romasanta said the POC can immediately convene the general assembly and accept the BAP-SBP to the Olympic fold.

"If it is the president who will call for the GA, he can immediately convene the GA," said Romasanta. *With a report from June Navarro*

COMPOUND ARCHERY

Yap rips Asian mark, nails Bangkok title

FILIPINO COMPOUND ARCHER Earl Benjamin Yap smashed the long-standing Asian record with a score of 351 points to rule the qualifying round yesterday of the 2007 Asian Grand Prix in Bangkok.

The 22-year-old Yap, Asia's top-ranked archer, erased the old mark of 348 held by a South Korean and his own Philippine record of 346 in the first of a winning 699 two-string series.

Yap missed the perfect 720 by just 21 points as he scored 348 in the second string. He bested 2005 Bangkok GP winner Adam Richard of Australia (342-345) by 12 points.

An RP quartet made up of Yap, Kit Cojuangco Jr., Jorge Vargas and Karl Achacoso posted 2046 to rule the team qualifying round, beating Iran (2043) and Malaysia (2042).

Lone RP woman entry Amaya Paz weathered equipment problems to salvage second on strings of 332 and 334. She finished behind an Indian who shot 339 and 335.

Cojuangco shot a personal-best 346 and a 338 for 684 to finish sixth in the men's division.

Hapee eyes sweep; Harbour, Toyota Otis fives break 1-1 tie

AFTER CLINCHING an outright semifinal berth, Hapee-PCU hopes to complete another quick trip, this time to the PBL Silver Cup finals.

GAMES TODAY
(Olivarez College Sports Center)
2 p.m.— Harbour Centre vs Toyota Otis
4 p.m.— Mail and More vs Hapee-PCU

The Teeth Masters shoot for a 3-0 sweep in their best-of-five semifinal showdown versus Mail and More at 4 p.m. today at the Olivarez College Sports Center in Paranaque.

"We can't underestimate them, they are capable of coming back, so we have to prepare hard for them," said Hapee-PCU coach Jun Noel.

Harbour Centre and Toyota Otis earlier break their 1-1 tie at 2 p.m. in their own semifinal duel.

Teeth Master Jason Castro continued to make a strong case for MVP honors with another sensational performance of 23 points, five rebounds and five assists in Hapee-PCU's Game 2 win, 81-65, last Saturday.

The Teeth Masters, also starring Castro, claimed the semifinal opener, 81-67.

Veteran guard Chico Lanete also came through over the weekend with 31 points to lead Harbour Centre to an 80-74 victory that leveled the series at 1-1.

But coach Jorge Gallent noted that the Port Masters still have a lot to work on after squandering huge leads in their two semifinal games.

Toyota Otis claimed Game 1 with a come-from-behind victory, 84-77, behind point guard Marvin Cruz.

"We have to adjust more on the mental side of the game," said Sparks mentor Louie Alas. *Jasmine W. Payo*

SPORTSWATCH

Agrabio new RP super feather champ

DALAGUETE, CEBU—MANILA-BASED DODIE BOY AGRABIO OUTpunched the much-taller JR Sollano to win the vacant Philippine super featherweight title here on Saturday. The title was relinquished early this year by Jimrex Jaca so he could campaign for the WBO Asia Pacific title on Feb. 24 against Indonesia's Simson Butar-Butar. Agrabio landed the cleaner shots, making good use of a wild right to gain the nod of all three judges by scores of 115-114, 116-112 and 116-112. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Blu Girls lose to Taiwanese, seek 4th

TAINAN CITY, TAIPEI—THE PHILIPPINE BLU GIRLS ABSORBED A 3-0 shutout loss from host Chinese Taipei yesterday, leaving the reigning SEA Games champions with nothing but fourth place to aspire for in the Asia-Oceania Olympic Softball Qualifier. The Taiwanese clustered their runs in the fourth inning and went on to secure a slot in the best-of-three playoffs for the lone Olympic berth with its clean 9-0 record. With a 2-7 slate that included a second loss to North Korea late Sunday, the Blu Girls have to beat South Korea by a margin of three runs today to place fourth in the six-team field.

Made to move

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SPORTS

Raptors, Hawks stretch win run

TORONTO—THE TORONTO Raptors hit a season high in points and won their third straight game, downing the Los Angeles Clippers 122-110 in National Basketball Association play on Sunday.

Chris Bosh led the Raptors with 27 points as Toronto (25-23) took a three-game lead in the Atlantic Division standings after New Jersey lost at home to Atlanta.

The Raptors, who won their fifth straight home game and now also play five of their next seven at the Air Canada Centre, took their biggest division lead this season after shooting 59 percent.

Toronto also tied a franchise record for shooting in a half by shooting 70 percent from the field in the first half and scoring 66 points, a season high, to take a 66-54 lead at the intermission.

The Raptors never surrendered that lead in an impressive performance that saw them make 12 of their 20 shots from 3-point range before an enthusiastic crowd of 17,214.

Morris Peterson added 18 points for the Raptors, who had six players in double digits in scoring. T.J. Ford, Anthony Parker and Jorge Garbajosa all contributed 17 points for the winners.

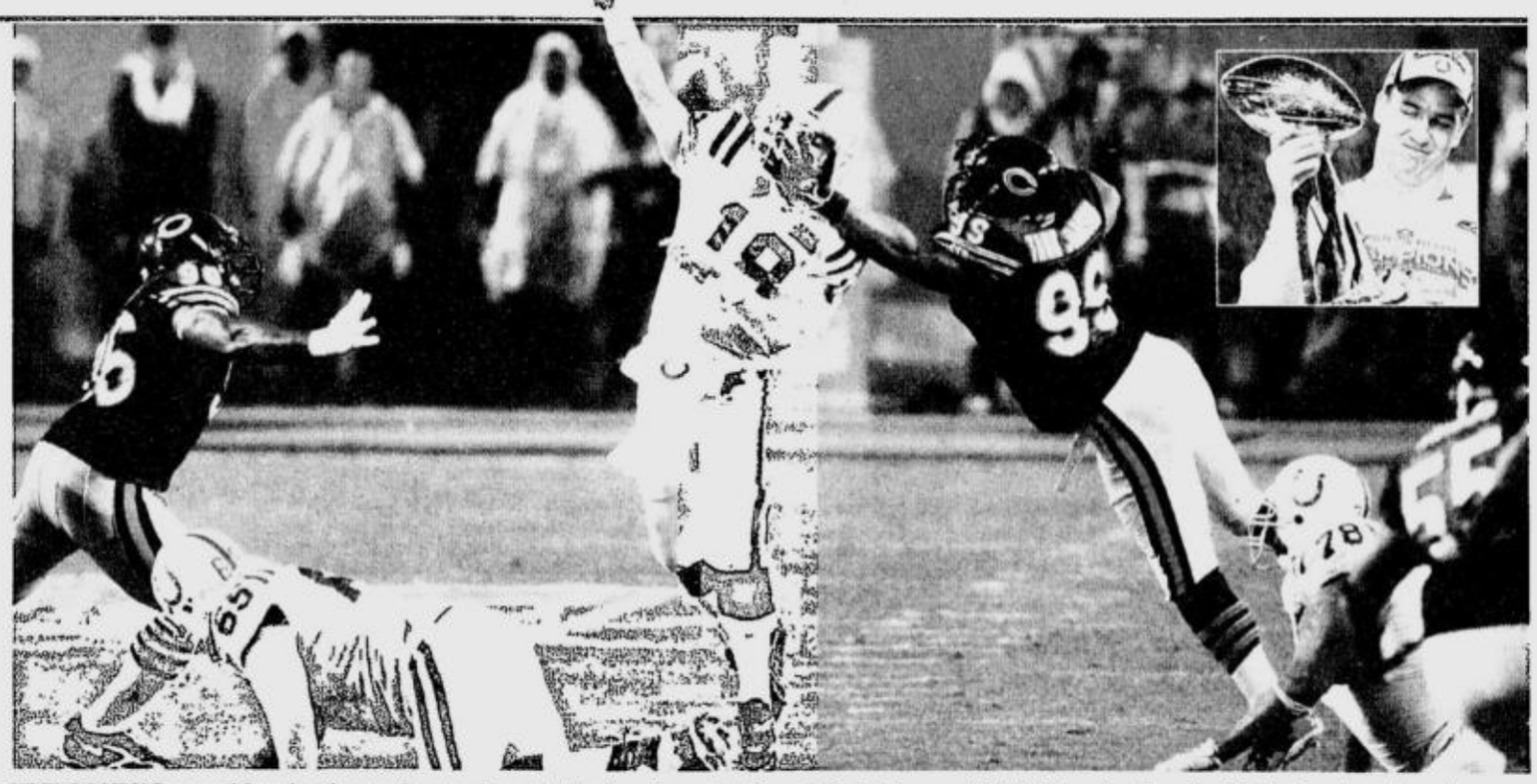
The Atlanta Hawks are on their first three-game road winning streak since 2000 after they edged the New Jersey Nets, 101-99 in overtime.

Joe Johnson led Atlanta with 37 points and Tyronn Lue hit a 23-foot jumper for the winning basket.

Chauncey Billups had 18 points and 10 assists as the Detroit Pistons beat the Cleveland Cavaliers, 90-78, Detroit's fifth straight regular season win over the Cavs. LeBron James had 21 points, six assists and five rebounds for Cleveland. *Reuters*

NBA on TV today

10 a.m.—Chicago vs Utah (replays at 4 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.)



THE COLTS' Peyton Manning (center) gets a hand to the face from the Bears' Tank Johnson (right). Manning (inset) with the Lombardi trophy. AFP

Colts rule Super Bowl

Manning main man in thrashing of Bears

MIAMI—THE INDIANAPOLIS Colts outplayed the Chicago Bears, 29-17, in a wet and wild Super Bowl on Sunday.

A team built for indoors found its footing on a rain-soaked track and its star quarterback, Peyton Manning, proved he can indeed win the big game—the NFL's biggest game.

That's what it was for Tony Dungy, too. He became the first black coach to win the championship, beating good friend and protege Lovie Smith in a game that featured two black coaches for the first time in Super Bowl history.

"It's hard to put into words," said Manning, the game's MVP after hitting 25 of 38 passes for 247 yards with one touchdown and one interception. "I'm proud to be part of this team. We stuck together, won this game for our leader, Tony Dungy."

It was a game of firsts: The first rainy Super Bowl and the first time an opening kickoff was run back for a touchdown when sensational Bears rookie Devin Hester sped downfield for 92 yards.

And not since Buffalo self-destructed with nine turnovers in losing to Dallas 14 years ago had there been so much messiness. The first half was marred by six turnovers, three for each team. Even American football's most clutch kicker, Adam Vinatieri, missed a chip-shot field goal, and an extra point attempt was botched, too.

The second half wasn't quite so ugly, but when much-maligned Bears quarterback Rex Grossman's wobbler was picked off and returned 56 yards for a touchdown by Kelvin Hayden with 11:44 remaining, it was over.

"I'm so proud of our guys," Dungy said. "We took the hit early with Devin Hester. We talked about it; it's going to be a storm. Sometimes you have to work for it. Our guys played so hard and I can't tell you how proud I am of our group, our organization and our city."

Chicago, which led the league in takeaways this season, finished with five turnovers, including two interceptions by Grossman.

The Colts will take it. It's their first title since the 1970 season, when they played in Baltimore.

It was confirmation of Manning's brilliance, even if he didn't need to be dynamic. The son of a quarterback who never got to the playoffs, Manning has been a star throughout his university career at Tennessee and his nine pro seasons with the Colts.

Now he is a champion.

It also was a validation of Dungy's leadership. He helped build Tampa Bay, one of the NFL's worst franchises, into a contender before being fired after the 2001 season. The next year, it won the Super Bowl under Jon Gruden.

The Colts hoisted their coach on their shoulders and he switched his blue Colts cap for a white one that read "NFL champions." Dungy was carried from the sideline, then was lowered so he could share a long embrace and a handshake with Smith.

"I'm proud to be representing the African-American coaches and the first African-American coach to win this," Dungy said.

Chicago was denied its first Super Bowl title since the powerhouse 1985 team. *AP*

Stenson prevails; Woods lands 3rd

DUBAI, UNITED ARAB Emirates—Tiger Woods failed to take advantage of the well-kept greens at the Emirates Golf Club on Sunday, and that cost him the chance to retain his title at the Dubai Desert Classic.

STENSON: Home bet. AFP

Woods, who won his seventh straight tournament on the US PGA Tour last week at the Buick Invitational, couldn't get his putts to drop in Dubai, leaving him two strokes behind champion Henrik Stenson in third place.

"That's one of the worst putting weeks I've had in a long time," said Woods, who shot a 3-under 69 to finish at 17-under 271. "I'm going to go home and just kind of figure it out. Hopefully get my putting organized before I compete again."

Stenson (68) began the day two shots behind Ernie Els (71). But the Swede had five birdies on his home course to finish at 19-under 269. Els finished second, a shot behind Stenson.

On the 13th, with Roger Federer and Michael Schumacher looking on, Woods barely missed a 30-foot eagle putt, the ball resting on the rim of the cup and Woods falling to his knees in dismay. The American tapped the ball in for a birdie, then strolled over to greet Federer. Woods shared third place with Niclas Fasth (68).

Stenson, who has lived in Dubai for three years, is a member of the Emirates Golf Club. "It's just unbelievable to win in your home tournament," Stenson said. *AP*

Ronaldo wants national team slot back

SAO PAULO, BRAZIL—RONALDO BELIEVES HIS MOVE FROM REAL Madrid to AC Milan will help him return to the Brazil squad. "I want to regain my space in the national team," Ronaldo told the Globo Esporte Web site on Sunday. "To do that I'll need to play well and score goals for Milan, and if I do well and stay as a starter, (Brazil coach) Dunga will call me again." Dunga hasn't selected Ronaldo for any of the six friendlies Brazil has played after the tournament in Germany. *AP*

Manila rewards top athletes with scholarships

MANILA HAS SET A STANDARD FOR LOCAL government units and a milestone in Philippine sports by giving top athletes from the Big City the chance to pursue a career in sports.

The city will give scholarships to athletes who excelled in the Manila Youth Games and the MY Games National Invitational leading to a degree in Bachelor of Science in Physical Education and Sports at the Universidad de Manila, formerly the City College of Manila.

A brainchild of Arnold "Ali" Atienza, chair of the Manila Sports Council which organizes the annual MY Games and MY Games National Invitational, the course is a first of its kind in the country.

"One of our long-term plans is to provide Manila's deserving athletes with proper college education through scholarships while giving them the time and tools to train and further improve their skills," said the son of Manila Mayor Lito Atienza.

The course is free for deserving athletes from the city's public high schools, according to the young Atienza, also the Presidential Assistant for Youth and Sports and head of the Inner City Development Committee of City Hall.

"It will also serve as an avenue to discover and develop coaches and trainers who can share their expertise to the city's youth," said Atienza, a former Asian taekwondo champion.

"The inclusion of sports in the curriculum of the city government-run university will benefit Manila's top athletes who cannot afford proper college education."

The faculty of the regular four-year course includes the best in the field of physical education and sports, mostly masters degree holders, said UDM president Dr. Rodrigo Malunhao.

The university board fully backs the course.

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RP Hall of Fame needs funding

CLEAN LIVING
Manolo R. Iñigo

ONE OF THE RALLYING POINTS THAT inspire all Filipinos is sports. No field of human activity presents more opportunities for satisfying this need to inspire us than sports. And what can best preserve this vision but a monument to symbolize the Filipino's athletic excellence than the Philippine Hall of Fame?

It is for this reason that the first ever Hall of Fame was established.

Cita Velasco of the Philippine Sports Commission, however, said that the project still needs funding, specially from the private sector.

* * *

Tracing back history, the country's first Olympic medal was won by swimmer Teofilo Yldefonso in 1928. He bagged the bronze medal in the 200-meter backstroke, a feat which he duplicated in the next Olympic Games in Los Angeles.

Rafael "Paeng" Nepomuceno is the only man to win the World Cup of Bowling four times, earning him a spot in the Guinness Book of World Records, while boxers Anthony Villanueva and Mansueto "Onyok" Velasco won the country's only silver medals in Olympic competition.

* * *

The Hall of Fame is envisioned to showcase the triumph of the Filipino spirit in the sporting field. For a backgrounder, in 1985 the UP Sports Foundation launched "Project Olympic Gold," which was geared towards the establishment of the "Hall of Fame."

The project, however, was aborted after the Edsa Revolution.

The UPSF's board of trustees included illustrious members such as Ambassador Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco, the late Gov. Jose Sering, former President Fidel V. Ramos, Augusto "Gus" Villanueva, Edgardo Espiritu, Marcelino Espino, Aparicio Mequi and the late Antonio Siddayao.

* * *

Then in 1994, former PSC chair Generoso Lopez Jr. initiated consultative meetings with top sports leaders from both government and private sectors. After a series of meetings, the group formed the executive committee, the advisory council and other committees including finance, operations, historical research, marketing, publicity and screening.

An "Organizational Set-up" and a "Flow Chart/Manner of Selection of Enshrinees" were also proposed. The plan included housing a Sports Library and Museum, a Sports Shop and a Sports Memorabilia Center.

A copy was presented to Ramos. The group also requested for a presidential authority to allocate the ground floor of the Quirino Grandstand.

The NPDC director promised to discuss the plan with the Philippine Tourism Authority. The PSC prepared a Memorandum of Agreement and furnished all offices concerned with a copy each together with a blueprint of the plans. There were no responses despite follow-ups and the plan died a natural death owing to the government bureaucracy.

* * *

Then in 1995, the PSC chair Philip Ella Juico attempted to continue the negotiations but, alas, the project was again shelved for lack of funds. So with chair Eric Buhain. Fortunately, the Hall of Fame project was realized when William "Butch" Ramirez took over.

San Juan 4-cocker slated Saturday

FRESH OFF ITS STAGING OF THE SJC 8-COCK INTERNATIONAL DERBY, SAN JUAN COLISEUM will hold a 4-cock event on Feb. 10 with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. The event, which stakes a guaranteed prize of P400,000, will be hosted by the LB Candelaria group of Capt. Ducar Dimayuga and Muroy Dolorico. Entries must be presented at the SJC office on Friday. Dimayuga and Dolorico have confirmed the participation of over 40 entries, mostly from the Pasay Cockpit Cockers Association (PCCA) and SJC Cockers Club.

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Power grid auction fails yet again

PSALM expresses its disappointment

By Abigail L. Ho

FOR THE THIRD TIME SINCE 2003, PUBLIC BIDDING FOR THE 25-year National Transmission Corp. (Transco) concession was declared a failure when only one of three pre-qualified bidders submitted its final technical and financial bid just minutes before the deadline.

While representatives of all the pre-qualified groups were present during yesterday's bidding at the Development Bank of the Philippines headquarters in Makati City, only the consortium composed of Citadel Holdings Corp. (60 percent) and Italy's Terna SPA (40 percent) submitted its bid 15 minutes before the noon deadline.

The other pre-qualified bidders—the consortium of local firm Triratna Holdings Corp. (60 percent), Malaysia's Tenaga Nasional Berhad (5 percent) and Newbridge Asia IV LP (35 percent) and the group of Monte Oro Grid Resources Corp. (60 percent) and China's State Grid Corp. (40 percent), represented by Walter Brown—just waited in the wings until the digital clock in the meeting room struck noon.

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) president Nieves Osorio officially declared the bidding a failure five minutes past noon.

The power grid concession was valued at P138 billion ($2.83 billion).

In a news briefing, Finance Secretary and PSALM chair Margarito Teves expressed his disappointment over the turn of events.

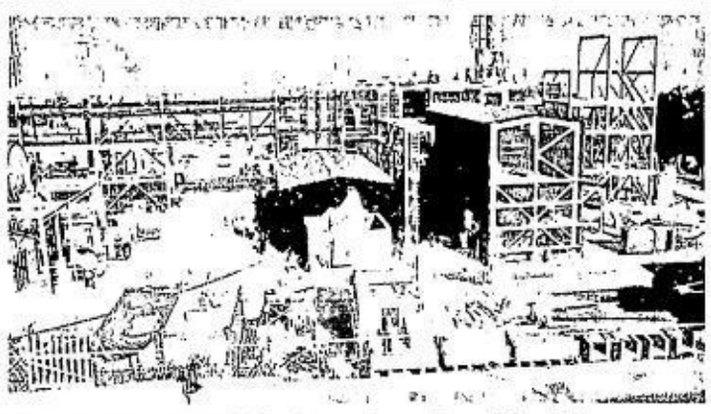
"It didn't jive with our expectations because we were expecting a successful bid by today," he said.

According to Teves, President Macapagal-Arroyo was calm about the whole thing, quoting her as saying that the government should "go through the reasonable approach, after reflection by the PSALM board."

"The board will decide in a few days whether to negotiate or to rebid," Teves said. "We hope to come up with a decision by the end of the week."

In a separate interview, Triratna group representative Ramon Ang, also president of local conglomerate San Miguel Corp., said there were issues that PSALM had failed to resolve, prompt-

POWER/ B3



THE CONTROVERSIAL mine on Rapu-Rapu Island. The Australian mining firm is expected to start operations on the island soon. INQUIRER PHOTO

Lafayette waiting for word to reopen mine

RAPU-RAPU ISLAND—THE government on Thursday will decide whether to allow Australia's Lafayette Mining Ltd. to reopen its copper and zinc mine here, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes yesterday said.

Reyes was widely expected to announce the reopening of the mine more than a year after it was shut due to cyanide spills.

He said a team of mining and pollution experts would visit Rapu-Rapu on Tuesday and report their findings to the environment department's Pollution Adjudication Board.

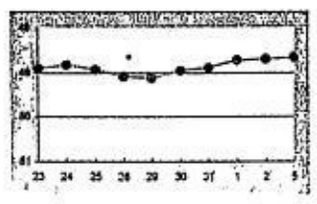
"The objective is to validate the lifting of the cease and desist order," Reyes said by telephone.

According to Lafayette Mining Philippines president Carlos Dominguez, the company is ready to start operations, having completed improvements

LAFAYETTE / B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



DECEMBER

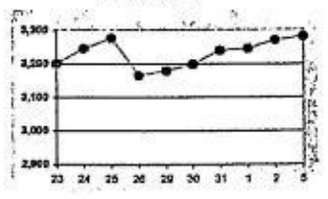
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 48.67 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 5, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX
FEBRUARY



(See stock market report on Page B2)

Shares close 0.39% higher

SHARE PRICES YESTERDAY CLOSED 0.39 percent higher for the best finish in nearly a decade as investors were buoyed by expec-

SHARES/ B2

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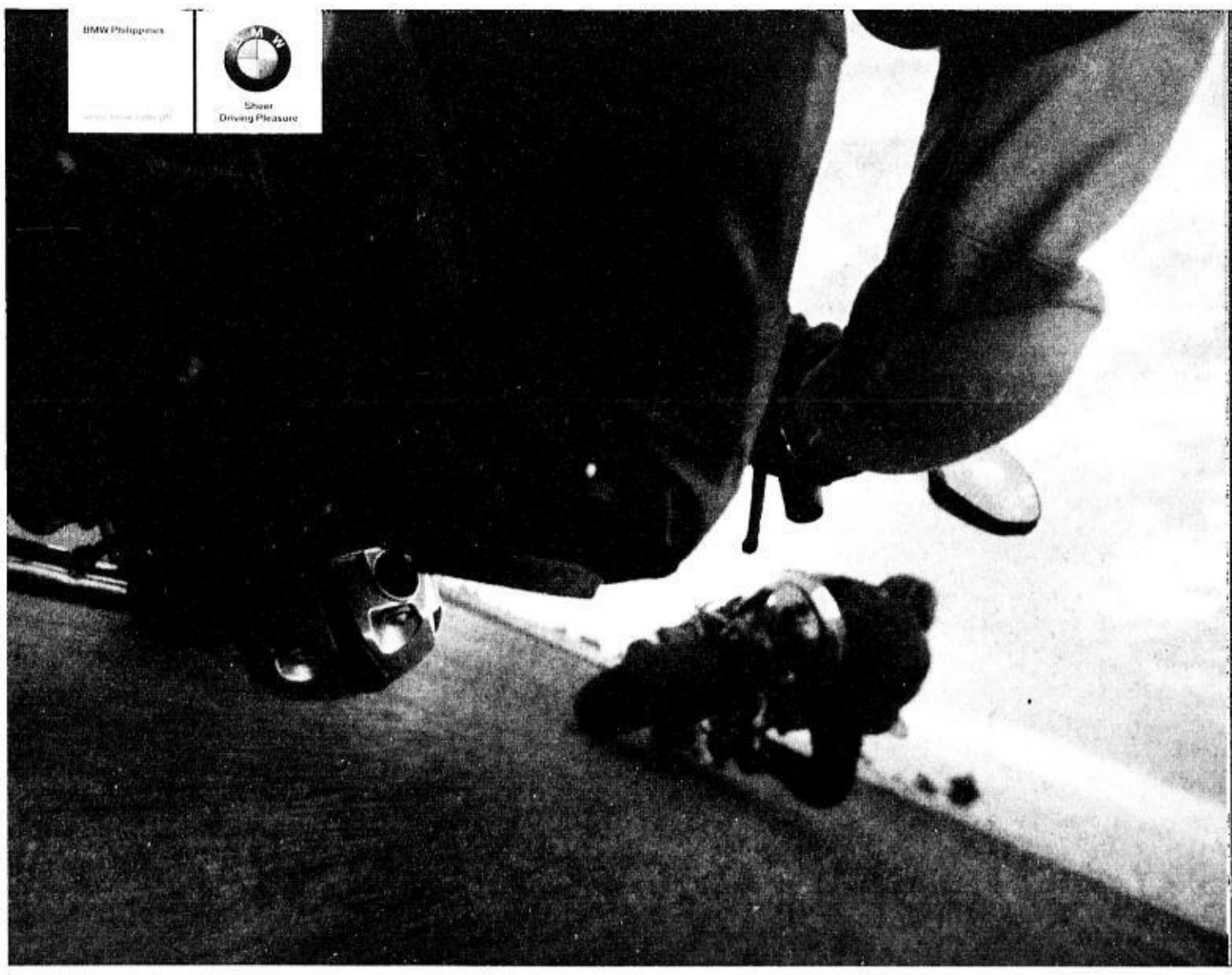

The key to success

MR. BEARBULL

Ron Nathan

SOME INVESTORS TEND TO get bored because I write about macroeconomics, i.e. what is going on in the United States, China, Asia-Pacific and Europe. But unless you know what is going on in the rest of the world, you cannot predict what is likely to happen next in the Philippines.

My first recommendations in the INQUIRER were TEL and GLOBE at P226 and P400. At the time, the companies had large dollar debts and little landline growth.

But abroad, I had been watching the incredible expansion of cell phones, as they were then called. It seemed to me that if manufacturers like NOKIA could produce them cheaply enough, and if TEL, GLO, and later PLTL and DGTL could make the monthly subscription low enough, then there was incredible room for expansion.

Filipinos have two qualities, they love to eat every two hours and they love to talk.

So I recommended these two stocks, saying that there was five years of rapid expansion ahead. I was correct and TEL has risen P2200 to 12 times its original price while GLO has risen P1000 to 3 1/2 times its original price.

It was simply a case of seeing what was happening in the first world countries and then projecting it to the third world countries.

I did the same theory with Fil Hispano, a totally unknown company, now known as PAXYS. I wrote an article entitled, "The hottest stock in town." To the consternation of readers, who thought I was on drugs, I wrote, "Sell your house, your wife and children, and buy the IPO at 3.65."

Most readers were so astonished by this outburst that they followed my advice and some readers still hold the stock, which is now P24. As there was a right issue of 1 for 2 at P1, the adjusted price is P2.80 and the stock has risen 8 1/2 times.

This was not luck. I had watched on TV how fast call centers were growing in Bangalore, India, because outsourcing was so much cheaper and Indians spoke English. They had an area the size of a football field employing 230,000 agents.

Demand for English-speaking people was so strong that it seemed obvious that some of the business would eventually spread to the Philippines, especially as Filipinos speak American English.

So I went to their office in CITIBANK, where they occupied five floors, and spent three days learning about how call centers worked. The directors, supervisors, technicians and agents were all extremely helpful and I became convinced that this was the next industry to experience at least five years rapid expansion.

I was so enthusiastic that I told everyone to buy and hold and I wrote what was probably one of my best articles.

But we have to move on and figure out where to invest next.

The outlook for the country is so good that you can probably make money in any decently managed company. Property looks a good bet but on a P/E ratio of 44, ALI looks expensive.

In my newsletter, I occasionally give the 1-year price targets of all the foreign brokers on all the blue chips, which is very useful information, but many of them have reached or exceeded these targets.

So where to invest now?

The obvious answer, even last year, was the mining sector. Ever since the Supreme Court made it possible for foreign companies to own 100 percent of mining projects, this became the sector of choice. I recommended PHILEX at P1.20 and P1.40, purely on technical analysis.

Then I noted that the company published on the PSE website, its monthly shipping of copper and gold. As the company sold three months forward, it was child's play to calculate that profits would exceed P2.4 billion in 2006.

This put the shares on a P/E of 1.5 so I wrote a detailed buying recommendation at P1.64. I got clients out at P4.20 to P4.80 because it looked fully valued.

I then recommended APEX but after rising sharply, it got suspended and lost half its value. It eventually recovered but then proceeded to defer its AGM five times without any explanation. I got fed up and switched most investors into another stock but I cannot divulge it at present because the INQUIRER is having a debate about CONFLICT OF INTERESTS.

I suggested that we follow the international practice of the United States and the United Kingdom, but up till now, there has been no decision. I will not answer e-mails.

Last year, investment in mining fell 76 percent because of all the red tape but Natural Resources Secretary REYES has promised to speed everything up and recently granted a permit to Manila Mining. Its partner, Anglo-American has asked for 12 permits and it is the largest mining company in the world.

Consolidated Goldfields, the fourth largest gold company, is coming to the Philippines to tie up with companies with sites to offer. We are sitting on $1 trillion of minerals, according to the government. REYES said, "The mining boom will start this year. We see it setting in by 2008."

X-STRATA is going into copper in a big way and OCEANA took over CLIMAX MINING to invest in copper-gold. The government plans to auction BATONG-BUHAY gold mines and NORTH DAVOA MINING. APX and AT have now started producing and vast amounts of money form China, Australia, Canada and South Africa are all looking for viable projects.

The most sought-after metal is nickel but the price is so high that China is now looking instead for laterites, low-grade nickel ore found in the Philippines. Using blast furnaces, this can be turned into nickel pig iron containing 1-3 percent nickel that can be used by stainless steel makers to produce a vast array of products.

The ore can be produced at low cost by open-cut mining and there are huge deposits here that might be snapped up at any moment.

A new mining exploration company has multiple deposits of laterites in various parts of the Philippines and I expect them to sign a large long-term contract soon. They have suitors from China, Canada and Australia. I hope that INQUIRER will come to a quick decision so that I can name the stock.

***

My wife and I were having a serious discussion about euthanasia. I said that if I could only be kept alive by a machine and fed by liquids, I would rather that she would end it. So she switched off the TV and threw away my beer.

mrbearbull@hotmail.com

Margin accounts make comeback

SOPHISTICATED AND HIGH-NET WORTH investors may now leverage their stock holdings and take more risks in the equities market after an online stockbroker revived and formalized the idea of a "margin trading" facility.

In a briefing yesterday, officials of CitisecOnline said that local stock market investors were now "better equipped" to take more risks because of technological advancements in equities trading.

Margin trading allows an investor to borrow funds from the broker to buy stocks using a combination of stocks and cash as collateral for the loan.

The facility effectively multiplies the earning potential of the investor, but also increases his risk in the event that stock prices move against him.

Margin trading was popular among stock market punters before the 1997 East Asian financial crisis, but quickly fell out of favor after local equity prices took a dive amid massive foreign selling.

Nonetheless, CitisecOnline president Conrado Bate said his firm was careful not to allow a return to the excesses of the past, aided by the fact that the stock market has matured significantly over the past decade.

"Overall, the stock market and listed companies have become more transparent," he said. "Major stock market participants, like the (Philippine Stock Exchange), listed companies and brokerages have become more accountable."

In a bid to strengthen its client base, CitisecOnline began offering a flexible credit line allowing a client to borrow funds using "marginable" stocks and cash as collateral. *Daxim L. Lucas*

Property boom ups ALI's 2006 earnings

By Daxim L. Lucas

AYALA LAND INC., THE COUNTRY'S LARGEST real estate developer, reported sharply higher sales figures for last year and a more modest rise in earnings due to the strength of the local property market.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, the firm said that net revenues rose by 20 percent, from P21.4 billion in 2005 to P25.5 billion in 2006 "notwithstanding the absence of extraordinary gains generated from the sale of the company's MRT investment" two years ago.

Ayala Land also ended 2006 with a net income of P3.9 billion, a 7-percent increase from P3.6 billion registered in 2005.

Excluding extraordinary items like the after-tax gain from the MRT transaction and provisions, net income for 2006 would have been 27 percent higher than the previous year's P3.2 billion.

"The year 2006 proved to be a successful year for Ayala Land as it benefited from positive economic developments which ushered in improved buyer confidence," Ayala Land president and CEO Jaime I. Ayala said in his disclosure.

"The company also continued to capitalize on the significant growth in the OFW (overseas Filipino worker) and BPO (business process outsourcing) markets which buoyed demand for residential and commercial real estate products," he added.

The Ayala Land chief said that "deliberate expansion" of product offerings, diversification into new growth areas and venture into strategic investments were expected to put the firm in a better position to tap "opportunities arising from favorable structural changes that drive growth in the property sector."

On the PSE yesterday, Ayala Land's shares ended at P17.50 a share, up slightly by 25 centavos from the previous day's close with P108.9 million worth of shares changing hands.

Ayala Land is one of the largest listed firms on the PSE, capitalized at P186.7 billion as of yesterday's closing price.

According to the firm, operating revenues, excluding interest and other investment income, totaled P23.6 billion and grew at an even higher rate of 37 percent.

"Heightened activity across all business lines drove operating revenues, with residential development and leasing businesses contributing the bulk," the firm told the stock exchange.

The company's residential development business accounted for the bulk of revenues at P14 billion or slightly more than half of total revenues. This was followed by shopping centers at P4 billion or 15 percent of total, while corporate business contributed P1.3 billion or 5 percent of total.

Strategic land bank management contributed 3 percent or P707 million, while Visayas-Mindano generated P168 million or 1 percent.

Collectively, the support businesses comprised of hotels, construction and property management, reported revenues of P3.4 billion or 13 percent of total revenues.

Globe '06 net grows 14%

By Riza T. Olchondra

GLOBE TELECOM INC. CLOSED 2006 WITH a net income of P11.8 billion, up 14 percent from the previous year due to a growing subscriber base and tight rein on costs.

Globe said in a statement that its subscriber base grew 26 percent last year, with a significant net addition of 1.2 million in the last quarter alone to boost its SIM base to 15.7 million at the end of the year.

Touch Mobile, its brand targeting the mass market, continued to be a major driver of growth, marking 2006 with a 57-percent year-on-year growth in subscribers to 4.9 million.

The country's second largest mobile phone company also reported that its consolidated service revenues grew 4 percent last year to P57 billion.

"The sustained growth in service revenues together with effective cost management measures drove double digit growth in earnings," Globe's report said.

"We started the year with strong first quarter performance and we are pleased that we were able to maintain that positive momentum forward, bringing 2006 to a very good close," Globe president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr. said in a statement. "We are particularly pleased with how the market has warmly received our various service offers, and we look forward to introducing more compelling propositions in 2007."

Offers designed to address the specific needs of Globe's priority segments have helped drive Globe Telecom's growth and improved market position, the company said.

Through its Super Sulit tariff programs, Globe introduced a number of SMS, voice, and IDD offers to address the needs of different types of subscribers.

Its Globe Kababayan and Kabalikat programs target the overseas Filipino communities by offering them connectivity, remittance, and livelihood services.

Following the launch of its co-branded prepaid SIMs with Singtel and Taiwan Mobile, Globe did a similar launch with CSL to provide overseas Filipinos in Hong Kong access to discounted Globe and TM call and text rates.

Shares close ...

From page B1

tations of strong corporate profits, dealers said.

They said the market continued to make steady gains against a background of an improving economy and government fiscal position, with sentiment positive on the outlook.

The composite index added 12.72 points to 3,281.90 for the best finish since March 10, 1997, when the market settled at 3,289.34. The index traded between 3,282.34 and 3,266.45.

The broader all-share index rose 13.78 points to 2,064.01.

Gainers led losers 69 to 35, while 56 stocks ended unchanged.

Volume was 2.3 billion shares worth P3.7 billion ($75.51 million).

One of the day's winners was, conglomerate Ayala Corp., whose shares rose P5.00 to P660. Its property arm Ayala Land Inc. was up 25 centavos at P17.50.

Philippine Long Distance Telephone lost P10 to P2,565.

San Miguel's A-shares were unchanged at P64.00 while its B-shares added 50 centavos to P76.50. *AFP*

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Feb. 5, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.1	7.7	7.1	7.7	394,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	55	56.5	54.5	54.5	1,511,400
Bank of the Phil. Islands	72.5	73	72	72.5	1,194,100
China Banking Corp.	750	780	750	770	2,320
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	400
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	6,360,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	96	98.5	96	98	150,700
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62.5	62.5	61.5	62.5	2,166,700
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50	50	50	50	2,300
Philippine National Bank	46.5	46.5	46	46.5	18,900
Phil. Savings Bank	55	56.5	55	55	101,300w
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	40	43.5	40	43.5	1,230,700
Security Bank Corp.	78	79	77.5	78	22,100
Union Bank of the Phil.	61	61.5	61	61.5	35,900
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kim eng Fin. Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	17,000
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	90,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5	5.2	5	5.2	539,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31.5	32	31.5	32	25,500
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.68	479,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	490	495	490	495	2,130
Ivantage Corp.	1.62	1.66	1.62	1.66	2,799,000
INDUSTRIAL ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.4	47,671,000
First Gen Corp.	59	59.5	58	59.5	574,100
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	76	77	76	77	660,100
Manila Electric Co. A	70.5	73.5	70.5	73	300,900
Manila Electric Co. B	71	74	71	72.5	4,061,000
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.5	10	9.5	9.9	15,856,000
Petron Corp.	4.65	4.8	4.65	4.75	12,889,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	360,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.24	743,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
CADP Group Corp.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	25	25.5	25	25	230,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5	627,200
Liberty Flour Mills Inc.	20	20	20	20	5,000
RFM Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.44	1.44	23,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.85	2.85	45,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.41	0.49	0.41	0.48	10,550,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	64	64	104,600
San Miguel Corp. B	76	76.5	76	76.5	355,900
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	2,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.06	2.08	2.04	2.04	672,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.25	18.25	17.75	18	11,973,400
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.42	1.52	1.42	1.46	96,944,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.8	3,199,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	1,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.1	8.1	8	8.1	2,865,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.7	5.8	9,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.3	5.5	5.3	5.3	788,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	3,442,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.29	0.29	0.28	0.28	11,330,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	250,000,000
Ayala Corp.	655	660	650	660	45,250
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.69	0.69	0.69	0.69	100,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2	10,161,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	8.8	9.1	8.7	8.9	273,000
Ajo Net Holdings Inc.	0.0675	0.07	0.065	0.065	154,400,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.2	3.3	3.2	3.2	20,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	2,450,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	96,700,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.28	1.3	1.24	1.24	5,212,000
Pal Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	50,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.24	1.24	1.24	1.24	65,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.35	33,677,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.6	7.7	7.6	7.7	1,114,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.3	5.7	5.3	5.7	5,670,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1	1	1	1	10,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.33	0.3	0.33	1,170,000
House Of Investments Inc.	3.4	3.55	3.4	3.5	2,307,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	12	12	11.5	11.75	1,531,700
Medco Holdings	0.38	0.4	0.38	0.39	830,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	5	5	4.85	4.95	241,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	2.02	2.02	1.9	1.98	1,318,000
Pacifica	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	3,000,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	29,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.72	530,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	3,200,000
SM Investments Corp.	392.5	392.5	387.5	390	317,970
South China Resources Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.04	1.08	130,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.64	1.7	1.64	1.7	6,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.13	10,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	17.25	17.5	17.25	17.5	6,285,500
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	330,000
Belle Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.22	1.22	3,740,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.46	1.56	1.32	1.42	17,388,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.74	1.8	1.74	1.8	23,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.48	0.48	0.48	550,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.6	3.8	3.5	3.8	2,316,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.86	1.98	1.86	1.94	599,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.32	0.32	500,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.76	0.78	0.76	0.78	10,620,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	70,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	370,000
Gotesco Land Inc.B	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	210,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	255,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	107,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	40,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.52	0.53	0.52	0.53	2,110,000
City & Land Developers	2.6	3	2.6	3	35,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.83	0.84	0.83	0.83	520,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.75	2.85	2.75	2.75	46,282,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.2	111,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	500,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	820,000
Polar Property Holdings	2	2.18	2	2.18	180,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.75	835,400
Phil Realty And Holdings	0.64	0.69	0.63	0.66	31,390,000
SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.75	2,666,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.25	12.25	3,815,200
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.63	0.66	0.62	0.64	3,580,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.5	23.5	23	23	114,400
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	1.94	2.04	1.94	2.02	31,942,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1410	1415	1405	1410	26,420
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	6.7	7.2	6.7	7.2	14,085,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2575	2580	2560	2565	80,580
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.34	0.34	0.32	0.33	19,470,000
Imperial Res.	0.021	0.021	0.021	0.021	20,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.75	2.8	2.75	2.8	576,000
IPVG Corp.	3.9	4	3.9	4	735,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.0525	0.0525	800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.06	0.06	0.0575	0.06	1,700,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.32	1.34	1.32	1.34	125,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.36	2.36	2.36	2.36	131,000
Philweb Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	146,500,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.52	1.52	1.5	1.5	405,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	24	26	24	26	542,100
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1	1	1	1	130,000
Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	42,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.08	2.3	2.08	2.26	13,800,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	600,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.65	0.67	0.65	0.65	1,690,000
EDUCATION					
IPeople Inc.	3.3	3.3	3.1	3.1	28,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.06	2.08	2.06	2.06	990,000
Paxys Inc.	24.25	24.5	24	24	380,900
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.5	271,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	183,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	54,700,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.3	9.7	9.3	9.6	1,473,000
Benguet Corp. A	12.75	12.75	12.5	12.5	126,300
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	2.6	2.85	2.6	2.85	11,000
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.84	0.85	0.82	0.84	22,730,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	5,030,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.29	3,570,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.025	190,100,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.028	0.029	0.028	0.029	232,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	58,200,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4	4.1	3.95	4.1	6,448,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	18.75	19.25	18.5	18.75	276,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.78	0.8	0.77	0.8	5,390,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.54	1.54	1.46	1.48	1,935,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.3	0.29	0.3	8,700,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	63,500,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	31,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.012	72,000,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	27,800

CURRENCIES

February 5, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.771367	1.000000	48.6970
Japan	Yen	0.006370	0.008258	0.4021
United Kingdom	Pound	1.517510	1.967300	95.8016
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.098804	0.128089	6.2376
Switzerland	Franc	0.618379	0.801667	39.0388
Canada	Dollar	0.650943	0.843882	41.0945
Singapore	Dollar	0.502683	0.651678	31.7348
Australia	Dollar	0.597634	0.774773	37.7291
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.046175	2.652661	129.1766
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205676	0.266638	12.9845
Brunei	Dollar	0.501051	0.649562	31.6317
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022229	0.028818	1.4034
UAE	Dirham	0.210033	0.272287	13.2596
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.296400	63.1308
Korea	Won	0.000823	0.001067	0.0520
China	Yuan**	0.099454	0.128932	6.2786
Argentina	Peso	0.249029	0.322841	15.7214
Brazil	REAL	0.367633	0.476599	23.2089
Denmark	Kroner	0.134160	0.173925	8.4696
India	Rupee	0.017531	0.022727	1.1067
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220390	0.285714	13.9134
Mexico	New Peso	0.070502	0.091399	4.4509
New Zealand	Dollar	0.524775	0.680318	33.1294
South Africa	Rand	0.107142	0.138899	6.7640
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023439	0.030386	1.4797

Source: REUTERS' FOREX CLOSING PRICES as of NY Time—Feb 2, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian Time Closing Rate as of 02-Feb-07

BOC officials wonder how to distribute cash perks

By Michelle V. Remo

AFTER EXCEEDING ITS REVENUE-collection target for last year, the Bureau of Customs is now in a quandary as to how the monetary incentive promised to over-performing revenue collectors would be distributed.

"We should be getting an incentive because of our performance, but the problem is how to determine the division of labor," Customs Commissioner Napoleon Morales said in a briefing on the government's 2006 fiscal performance held last week.

Morales said the BOC has tapped the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to provide support in the conduct of a study on how monetary incentives should be distributed among BOC personnel.

Under the Lateral Attrition law that took effect last year, monetary incentive shall be granted by the government to the BOC and the Bureau of Internal Revenue should they exceed their revenue collection targets.

The BIR, the biggest revenue earner for the national government among the line agencies, collected P651.9 billion in taxes last year, lower than the official target of P675.4 billion.

The law likewise states that underperforming revenue collectors should either be demoted, reassigned or dismissed from work.

Morales reported that the BOC last year collected P198.2 billion in taxes and import duties. This was higher than the official target of P196 billion set by the national government for the BOC.

Although the Lateral Attrition law already took effect last year, concerned authorities have not yet decided on how the distribution of incentives to employees of an over-performing agency should be made.

Morales said that even the amount of total incentives that the BOC should get and divide among its personnel was still undetermined.

Suki yucky

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

THEY SAY THAT Antonio "Tonyboy" Cojuangco is giving up the television network ABC-5.

Supposedly, Tonyboy is warming up to the advances of Philweb to acquire the country's third largest network.

Everybody knows that the publicly listed Philweb is under the control of former trade minister Roberto Ongpin.

But Philweb has other stockholders. The major one, or possibly even the biggest single stockholder, is e-PLDT.

That's the subsidiary of PLDT, which was once Tonyboy's. The telco giant is now controlled by the group of Manuel V. Pangilinan ("MVP" for short).

Thus, the PLDT deal between Tonyboy and MVP back in 1998 is becoming the electrifying talk of business town once again.

For one, what made Tonyboy sell the business that he used to treasure as his "family heirloom?"

And, if it is true that Tonyboy is entertaining Philweb's wooing, it seems that MVP indeed is his favorite customer. You know, *SUKI*!

Or is it the other way around: Tonyboy is the *suki*? Yuck!

* * *

THAT INFAMOUS fight for control of PHC, or Philcomsat Holdings Corp., has shifted from its boardroom and the courts to ... well, the Senate.

PHC is part of Philcomsat, which the PCGG sequestered, having been controlled by the Africa-Illusorio-Poblador-Nieto-Enrile group during the Marcos regime.

Now, the PCGG nominees in PHC are under attack in the Senate on allegation of "dissipation of funds."

Sen. Richard Gordon chairs the committee that recently yielded the floor to one of the accusers, Erlinda Illusorio-Bildner, for about three—again, THREE—hours.

It so happens that the "witness" belongs to the Africa-Illusorio faction.

The other camp is the so-called PCGG-Nieto alliance, although only the PCGG nominees are getting the flak in the Senate and, thus in media.

It was the Africa-Illusorio group that the GMA-7 news program featured at one time to have broken into the office of a PCGG nominee to the PHC board.

Now, the PHC is doing well, with resources of P1.5 billion today, considering that it started with a P10-million capital.

The mother firm Philcomsat, on the other hand, which by some mysterious force earlier went back to the Africa-Illusorio faction's control in 2000, is wobbling badly.

The PCGG accused the takeover group of irregular acts, such as the unauthorized sale of a jet plane, a helicopter, three condos, and stocks.

The funny thing is that, actually, the accusations and counter-accusations between the factions are already the subject of court cases.

Why does the Senate even bother to conduct hearings? And in whose aid?

* * *

THE GOVERNMENT monopoly Napocor now has another clever modus operandi to make our lives miserable with costly electricity.

Our darling Napocor is committing to sell the electricity generated by two (again, TWO) new upcoming private power plants.

Under the Epira, Napocor can no longer commit to pay for all the electricity from those new power plants, whether or not Napocor makes use of the electricity.

Thanks to Napocor's in-house mafia, which engineered the new agreements, Napocor just committed to the new plants precisely the same thing—a captive market, no competition, no risk at all!

One of the two new plants is a coal-fired facility in Cebu, owned by the South Korean company Kepco and local firm Salcon.

Kepco-Salcon assumes no risk at all. Whether or not Napocor uses the electricity, Napocor simply pays for Kepco-Salcon's capacity as ... well, "reserve."

The other is the Mindanao-based "Agus 3" of the Lanao Hydro Development Corp., or LHDC.

Right now, Napocor is forcing on retailers the power from Agus 3 for a bargain price of P4.32 per kwh, or only double the present rate of P2.10 per.

And senators say that among the owners of the new power plant are former Napocor officials. No wonder.

Under the agreements, Napocor also hands over to Kepco-Salco and LHDC its live "supply contracts" with all the utilities, much like an "assist pass" in the PBA.

And our beloved Napocor officials even called them "historic documents." Okay, they are historic in that they set bad precedents.

So, Napocor hands over its customers (oops, that's us) to the new plants, instead of selling power from the Napocor plants, which Napocor also refuses to privatize, right?

What will happen to the Napocor? Will it lose tons of money again? What's in those agreements for Napocor officials, anyway?

Well, they already went on record in Senate hearings that Napocor would only earn a "marketing fee."

Call it what you will, whether marketing fee, commission or kickback, it does not matter to us down here.

That, ahh, "thing" only adds to our electricity bills—all of us, the consumers.

That's why the power rates in this country will never go down.

Power grid auction ... From page B1

ing the consortium to withdraw from the auction.

"The issue of the solitary liability is the major problem," Ang said. "Otherwise, we will be willing to participate."

With solitary liability, each of the parties involved in the consortium may be held liable for the full amount of any damages that may result from the transaction. This means that the government can seek to recover the full amount of damages from any of the consortium members, no matter their stake in the company.

But Osorio said this issue had been resolved prior to the actual bidding. She said the solitary liability provision would only be in force until an actual concession agreement had been signed between PSALM and the winning bidder.

She said, without naming a particular bidder, that the government would have to revisit that particular provision and see why the bidders had misinterpreted that specific provision.

Citadel-Terna group representative Rogelio Singson, for his part, said they were willing to negotiate with the government for the Transco concession.

"We're ready and willing to negotiate with the government as soon as possible," Singson said. "The bid documents have already been signed. There's nothing left to negotiate, just the price."

He added that the group is even "willing to elevate our concern to the President."

We're considering all our options," Singson said. *With a report from Reuters*

Lafayette seen ... From page B1

to its mine structures.

Reyes had been scheduled to visit Rapu-Rapu, but his helicopter could not land there because of bad weather. He spoke to reporters assembled on Rapu-Rapu from nearby Legazpi City.

The Rapu-Rapu polymetallic project was the first foreign-owned mine to open in the Philippines after the Supreme Court upheld in December 2004 the legality of a law granting full foreign ownership of local mining projects from 40 percent.

But the spills in Rapu-Rapu in October 2005 raised the ire of powerful Catholic bishops and environment groups.

The mine started gold production in July 2005.

The accident occurred just as the government was rolling out the red carpet to lure foreign investors to pour money and help revive its once lucrative mining industry.

The country is said to have about $1 trillion worth of unexplored copper, gold and nickel resources.

Christine A. Gaylican, Reuters

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APEXMINES
APEX MINING CO., INC.
NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING
TO ALL STOCKHOLDERS:
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of the Company will be held on February 28, 2007 at 3:00 in the afternoon at Valle Verde Country Club, Capt. Javier St., Bo. Ugong, Pasig City to consider and take action upon the following matters:
1. Call to order;
2. Proof of Notice and Quorum;
3. Approval of the Minutes of the Stockholders Meeting held on June 29, 2005;
4. Report of the President;
5. Presentation and approval of the Financial Statements as of December 31, 2005 embodied in the 2005 Annual Report;
6. Ratification of the acts of directors, committees and officers of the corporation;
7. Appointment of external auditors;
8. Amendment of Article III Section 2 (Number of Directors) in the Amended By-Laws of the Corporation and Article Sixth (Number of Directors) in the Amended Articles of Incorporation;
9. Amendment of Article III Sections 4 and 5 (Regular and Special Meetings) in the Amended By-Laws of the Corporation;
10. Election of directors;
11. Consideration of such other business as may properly come before the meeting;
12. Adjournment.
The Board has fixed the close of business hours on January 17, 2007 as the record date for the determination of stockholders entitled to notice of meeting and to vote at the specified election date.
By Order of the Board of Directors
(original signed)
DAVID B. PUYAT
Corporate Secretary
6th Floor, Manilabank Building, Ayala Avenue, Makati City 1200
Tel. Nos.: 818-1591, 810-0882 • FAX No.: 810-0887

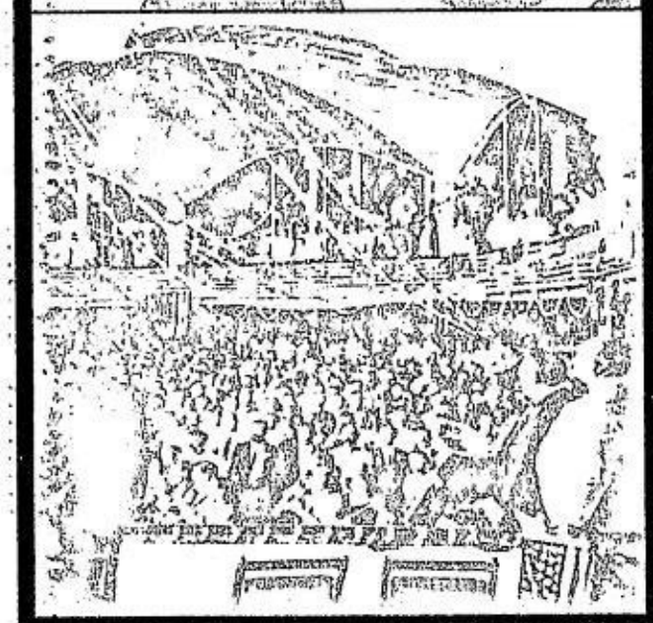
FREE INVESTORS SEMINAR
₱60 MILLION WORTH OF COMMISSIONS
to be given away in the next 6 months!!!
HOW ? EASY !
We will show you how to save 40% off the usual price of a condo thru the BUILD-YOUR-OWN Method and at the same time earn lots of commission.
WHAT'S MORE?
Now is the best time to invest in real estate and the best place is at Bonifacio Global City.
BUT WAIT !
Due to popular demand, we have
LIMITED SEATS ONLY.
So hurry and give us a call at :
815-8080 / 0917-5310551/ 0917-8470783/ 0928-2453646
0917-9439382/ 0915-400623
FIRST GLOBAL BYO CORP.
Free snacks and gifts for the first 30 guests.
Brokers, sales agents, businessmen and professionals are all WELCOME to attend.

Manulife

The Art of Life

While the Star-Spangled Banner was still being sung in American-occupied Philippines, Manulife officially received its license to operate in 1907.

1901



Manulife celebrates its Centennial Anniversary

100 Years of Service to the Filipino People

A hundred years ago, Manulife received its license to operate in the Philippines. At a time when travel and communications required great logistics, Manulife laid the foundation for what would become one of the country's most respected and trusted financial institutions.

A hundred years hence, Manulife has successfully weathered two world wars, tumultuous political upheavals, and various economic conditions to become one of the leading life insurance and pre-need providers in the country. This success story continues on as it seeks to deliver the very best financial products and services to the Filipino people.

On its Centenary, Manulife Philippines – a subsidiary of Standard & Poor's 'AAA' rated parent company, The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company – celebrates its achievements and thanks its valued clients, sales associates and employees who have become the cornerstone of its continued success in the country.

Mr. Carl Gustini
President & CEO
Manulife Philippines

1921

In 1923, the Manulife sign stood proudly atop the Kneedler building in the business district, a symbol of brisk sales of life insurance policies by Manulife's Manila agency led by E. E. Elser.

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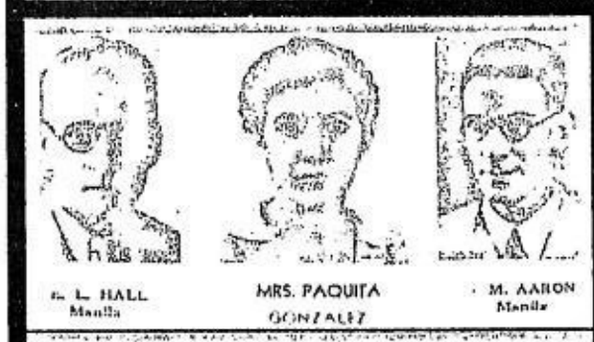
Thirty years after the first policy was sold in the Philippines, the Manila Agency led by E. L. Hall had broken Manulife international sales records.



E. L. HALL
Manila

MRS. PAQUITA GONZALEZ

M. AARON
Manila

1941

Unbelievable bravery. Unswerving loyalty. These became the hallmarks of Manulife employees during the Japanese occupation, risking life and limb to protect company records while attending to the needs of foreign Manulife staff incarcerated during the war.

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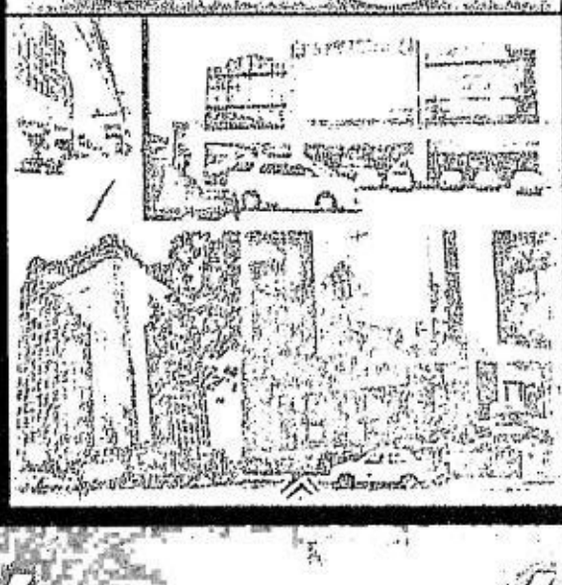
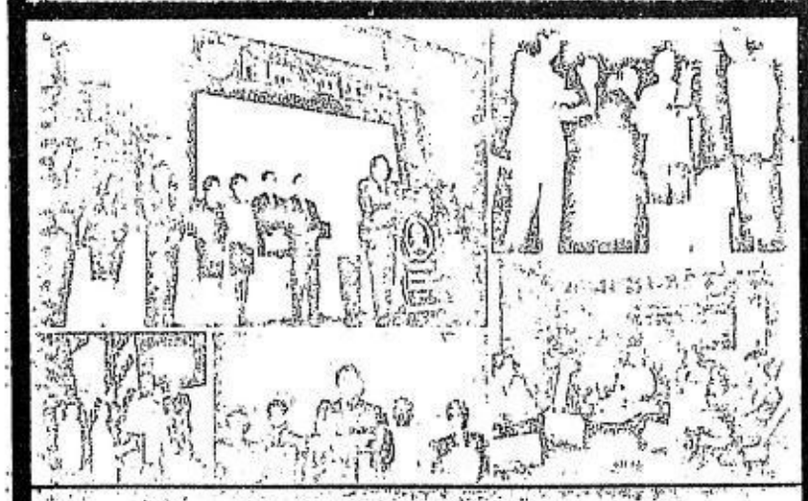


Manulife Centennial Gala
6:30 p.m., February 6, 2007
Ayala Museum, Makati City



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In 1999, Manulife became the the first foreign company to be listed in the Philippine Stock Exchange, the result of Manulife's successful conversion from a mutual company to a publicly traded institution. Fifty thousand Philippine policy holders receiving close to P8 Billion pesos in the form of cash and shares. It was among the largest fund transfers to take place in the 20th Century.

2001 to present

Manulife acquires 5 foreign-owned life insurance firms, successfully integrating different corporate cultures into its own, resulting in a sales force that was more customer-centric and service focused.

Manulife Phils. acquires MetLife insurance unit

Manulife Philippines welcomes Zurich Philippines' policyholders to the Manulife family!

Manulife buys Pramerica RP

The Manufacturers Life Insurance Company (Manulife Financial) has completed its purchase of the Pramerica Life Insurance Company, Inc., (Pramerica Life) in the Philippines from Prudential International Insurance Holdings, Ltd., first announced on May 16, 2006. Policies of Pramerica Life customers will remain in force under their original terms and conditions. "The purchase of Pramerica Life is consistent with Manulife's strategy to grow its global presence especially in the Asian region," said Vic Ajpe, senior executive vice president

BUSINESS

Manulife acquires local CMG accoun

Manulife to buy John Hancock for $11B

TORONTO/NEW YORK– Manulife Financial Corp., Canada's richest largest insurer, said it agreed to buy US life insurer John Hancock Financial Services Inc for around $10 billion, expanding its operations in the United States.

The stock-swap deal vaults Manulife back into the top spot among Canadian insurers and makes it the second largest in North America and No.3 in the world.

Under the deal, John Hancock shareholders will receive 1.1851 Manulife

2006 was a watershed year for Manulife Philippines. In December, Manulife Philippines posted the highest growth in Production Credit in its 100 year history in the Philippines. Clear evidence that more policy and plan holders trusted their hard-earned funds with Manulife in providing for their long-term financial security.

LKG Tower, 6801 Ayala Avenue Makati City, 1226 Philippines
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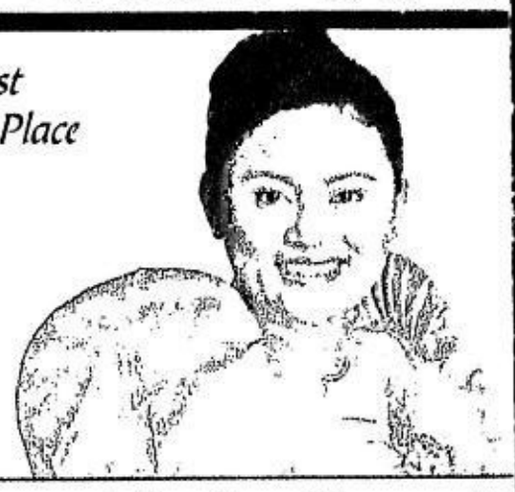
www.manulife.com

1st Place

Udy Enriquez, SF

CASE COU

1st Place



Marites Reyes, SF

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Manuel Chuaunsu, Ruby Chuaunsu (
Paul Genito and Udy Enriquez (

Mike Flores (SFA Elite), Amie Toledo (SFA) and Rominel Dela Rosa (SFA Elite)

Cara Dela [illegible] (SFA Elite), Jovi Piccio Ruby Que See (SFA), and Cha dela Llarte-B

Margo Ongkeko (SFA), John Chua and Julie Tamayao

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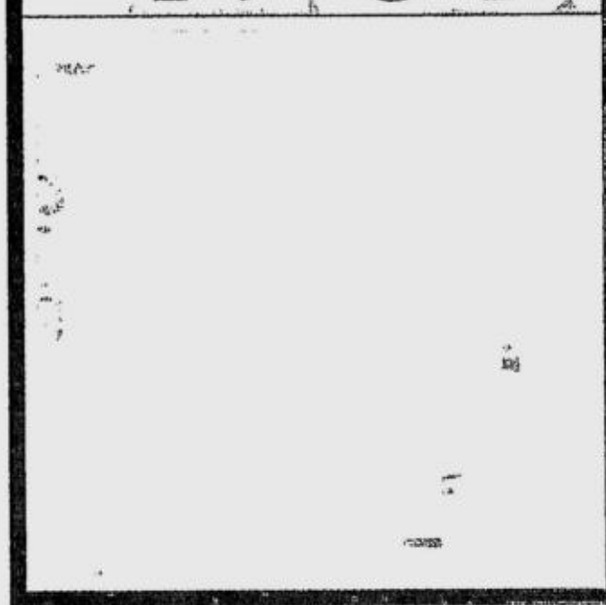

Manulife Philippines' Centennial Celebration

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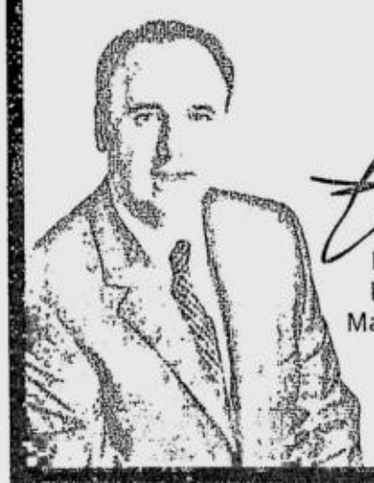

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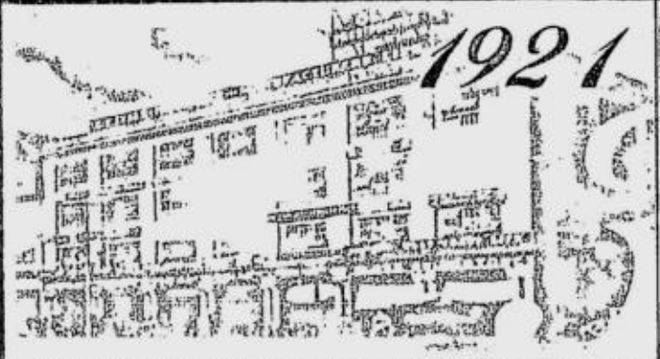

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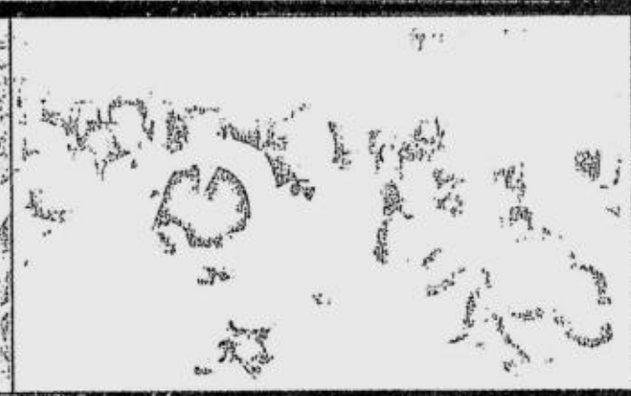

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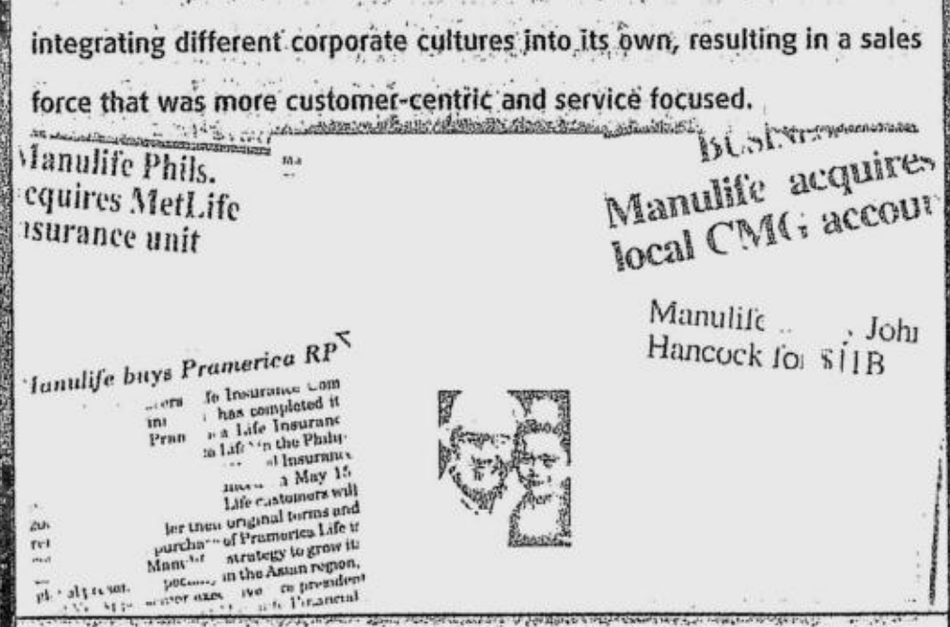

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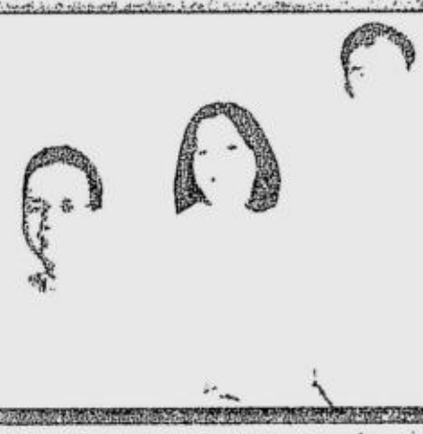

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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

PRODUCTION CREDIT

A

NT

2nd Place

Paul Genito

PRODUCTION CREDIT AND CASE COUNT

3rd Place

Ruby Chuaunsu, SFA Elite & Manuel Chuaunsu, AA

FA

2nd Place

Joy Capucion, SFA

ENTENNIAL ROUND TABLE AWARDEES

SFA Elite), SFA)

Gina Beatriz Lim (SFA), Betty Alejandro (Hall of Fame, SFA Elite) and Cherrie Cruz (SFA)

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(SFA Elite), rretto (SFA)

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Manulife
100 Years
Commitment, Dedication, Service to the Filipino!
1907 - 2007

Lim King Uy, Nellie Lim and Robert Ong Uy (SFA)

Czell Yu and Cora Garcia

MASTER BUILDERS

Jovi Piccio (SFA Elite), Betty Alejandro (Hall of Fame, SFA Elite), Tonyboy Rodriguez, Ruby Chuaunsu (SFA Elite), Esphie Chong (Hall of Fame, SFA Elite) and Maiye Ongkeko (SFA)

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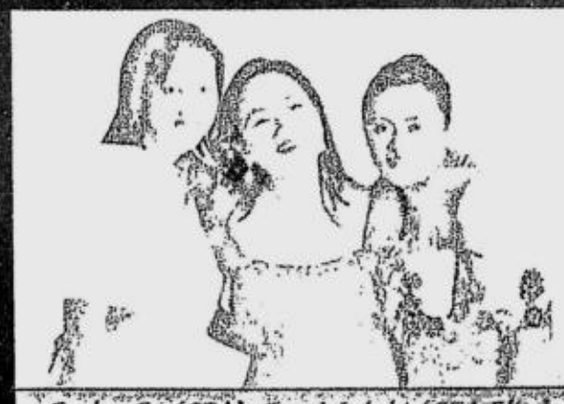

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RETAKE OF PRECEDING FRAME

Republic of the Philippines
ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
San Miguel Avenue, Pasig City

IN THE MATTER OF THE APPLICATION FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE RATE ADJUSTMENTS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PROVISIONS OF R.A. 9136, WITH PRAYER FOR PROVISIONAL AUTHORITY

ERC CASE NO. 2006-069 RC

AGUSAN DEL SUR ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC. (ASELCO),
Applicant.
x----------x

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Notice is hereby given that on November 9, 2006, the Agusan del Sur Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ASELCO) filed with the Commission, pursuant to the provisions of Republic Act No. 9136, an application for the approval of its rate adjustments with prayer for provisional authority.

Summarized below is the proposed schedule of rates and the estimated impact of the rate adjustment applied for each customer class of ASELCO.

Customer Class		Distribution Charge		Supply Charge		Metering Charge	
		Proposed Rates	Increase (Decrease)	Proposed Rates	Increase (Decrease)	Proposed Rates	Increase (Decrease)
Residential	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	0.8929 -	(0.2643) -	0.6495 -	(0.0300) -	0.4715 5.00	0.0947 -
Commercial	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	0.5396 -	(0.0053) -	- 42.26	- 0.9200	- 68.39	- 35.93
Industrial	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo PhP/meter/month	0.3682 - 21.00	0.0789 - 3.40	- 42.26 -	- 0.92 -	- - 390.50	- - (45.73)
Public Building	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	0.4596 -	(0.1440) -	- 42.26	- 0.9200	- 35.67	- 7.750
Street Lights	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo.	7.6969 -	5.1218 -	- 42.26	- 0.9200	- 35.67	- 7.750
Sale for resale	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	0.4573 -	(0.1198) -	- 42.26	- 0.9200	- 68.39	- 40.4700

Customer Class		Inter-class Cross Subsidy		Loan Condonation	
		Proposed Rates	Increase (Decrease)	Proposed Rates	Increase (Decrease)
Residential	PhP/kWh	-	0.3031	-	0.5398
Commercial	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	- -	(0.2918) -	- -	0.2150 5.4479
Industrial	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	- -	(0.6357) -	- -	0.1275 57.8123
Public Building	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	- -	(0.4855) -	- -	0.2375 4.8598
Street Lights	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	- -	0.3278 -	- -	0.4410 3.6290
Sale for resale	PhP/kWh PhP/Cust./Mo	- -	0.2988 -	- -	0.2247 4.1556

The Commission has set the application for initial hearing, pre-trial conference, and evidentiary hearing on the following dates:

DATE, TIME & VENUE	PARTICULARS
1. February 22, 2007 (Thursday), at two o'clock in the afternoon (2:00 P.M.) at the Session Hall, Sanggunian Panlalawigan Government Center, Prosperidad, Agusan del Sur.	1. Jurisdictional hearing and pre-trial conference
2. March 6, 2007 (Tuesday), at nine-thirty in the morning (9:30 A.M.) at the ERC Hearing Room, 15th Floor, Pacific Center Building, San Miguel Avenue, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	2. Evidentiary Hearing (Reception of evidence) and presentation of witnesses

All persons who have an interest in the subject matter of the proceeding may become a party by filing at least five (5) days prior to the initial hearing and subject to the requirements in the ERC's Rules of Practice and Procedure, a verified petition with the Commission giving the docket number and title of the proceeding and stating: (1) the petitioner's name and address; (2) the nature of petitioner's interest in the subject matter of the proceeding, and the way and manner in which such interest is affected by the issues involved in the proceeding, and (3) a statement of the relief desired.

All other persons who may want their views known to the Commission with respect to the subject matter of the proceeding may file their opposition to the application or comment thereon at any stage of the proceeding before the applicant concludes the presentation of its evidence. No particular form of opposition or comment is required, but the document letter or writing should contain the name and address of such person and a concise statement of the opposition or comment and the grounds relied upon.

All such persons who may wish to have a copy of the application may request the applicant, prior to the date of the initial hearing, that they be furnished with a copy of the application. The applicant is hereby directed to furnish all those making such request with copies of the application and its attachments subject to reimbursement of reasonable photocopying costs. Likewise, any such person may examine the application and other pertinent records filed with the Commission during the usual office hours.

WITNESS, the Honorable Chairman **RODOLFO B. ALBANO, JR.,** and the Honorable Commissioners **ALEJANDRO Z. BARIN, MARIA TERESA A.R. CASTAÑEDA,** and **JOSE C. REYES,** Energy Regulatory Commission, this 15th day of January, 2007 at Pasig City.

(Sgd.) ATTY. FRANCIS SATURNINO C. JUAN
Executive Director III

(PDI – Feb. 6 & 10, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Bohol
Municipality of Dagohoy

INVITATION FOR BIDS

Support for Strategic Local Development Investment Project (S2LDIP)

IMPROVEMENT/EXPANSION OF DAGOHOY MUNICIPAL WATERWORKS SYSTEM PROJECT
Loan No. 4833-PH

1. The Land Bank of the Philippines has received a loan from the World Bank toward the cost of Support for Strategic Local Development Investment Project (S2LDIP), and it intends to apply part or the whole of the proceeds of this loan to be on-lent to the Local Government Units (LGUs), public utilities or private operators providing local infrastructure services for payment under the contract for the Improvement/Expansion of Dagohoy Municipal Waterworks System.
2. The Municipal Government of Dagohoy has received a loan from LBP under the World Bank assisted S2LDIP loan facility. The Municipality of Dagohoy now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the Construction of Dagohoy Municipal Water System. Completion of the water system is required within eight (8) months from start of Contract.
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act No. 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act subject to exceptions stated in this Bidding Document. The Bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine its responsiveness to the technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during post-qualification.
4. The documents required in the Eligibility Documents shall be submitted as part of the Technical Documents of the Bidders as provided in the Instructions to Bidders.
5. Interested eligible Bidders may obtain further information from the Municipal Government of Dagohoy and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM starting February 6, 2007.
6. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested Bidders from the address below and upon payment of a non refundable fee of PhP 10,000.00. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the bidder or his authorized representative on or before March 6, 2007 at 2:00 PM.
7. The Municipal Government of Dagohoy will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all Eligible Bidders on February 19, 2007, 2:00 PM. at the SB Session Hall, Municipal Hall, Poblacion, Dagohoy, Bohol.
8. Eligible Bidders must submit their Bids at the Municipal Hall, Poblacion, Dagohoy, Bohol on or before March 8, 2007 at 2:00 PM. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of a Bank Guarantee and in an amount equivalent to 1.5% of bid proposal or in an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency. Late Bids shall not be accepted. Bid opening shall be on March 8, 2007 at 2:00 PM at the Dagohoy Municipal Hall. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below at 2:00 PM, March 8, 2007.
9. To be considered eligible and qualified a Bidder must:
   (a) have a successful experience as prime contractor in the construction of at least one (1) work of a nature and complexity equivalent to the Works in the last five (5) years, such being verifiable from completion certificates. To comply with this requirement the single contract cited should be at least 80% of the contract being procured.
   (b) have a minimum average annual construction turnover over the last three (3) years equal to 100% of the contract being procured.
   (c) submit audited balance sheets or, if not required by the law of the applicants country, other financial statements acceptable to the Procuring Entity, for the last five (5) years to demonstrate the current soundness of the applicants financial position and its prospective long-term profitability.
10. Completion of the Dagohoy Municipal Waterworks System is required eight (8) months after effectivity of start of Project.
11. The Municipal Government of Dagohoy reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Bids and Awards Committee
Engr. Ranulfo D. Sepe
BAC Chairperson
Municipal Hall
Poblacion, Dagohoy, Bohol
Cell #: (0917)3022000

(Sgd.) ENGR. RANULFO D. SEPE
BAC Chairperson

(PDI – February 6, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES (SPV-AMC) INC. Unit 2703, 88 Corporate Centre Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sanjivbhai Mukundbhai Chandorikar	General Manager – Marketing
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES INC. Unit 5302 PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave. cor. Rufino St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Feng Yang	Account Director
HUAWEI TECHNOLOGIES PHILIPPINES INC. Unit 5302 PBCom Tower, Ayala Ave. cor. Rufino St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	LI Zhou	TSD Engineer
AGRI-BIO PHILS., INC. Rm. 1203 The Gold Loop Towers, J. Escriva Drive, Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Meirong Wu	Consultant
TIGERWAY FACILITIES & RESOURCES, INC. 433 R. Pascual St., Mandaluyong City	Chunying Wang	Consultant
GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES (SPV-AMC) INC. Unit 2703, 88 Corporate Centre Salcedo Village, Makati City	Lalit Kumar Sehgal	Managing Director
eTELECARE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS, INC. 20/F, Citibank Sq., Eastwood Ave., Eastwood City, Cyberpark, Bagumbayan, Quezon City	Olivier Nicolas Lilian Barre	Multilingual Customer Service Associate
HONEY LETH TRADING CORP. 1602 M. Adriatico St., Malate, Manila	Sang Kyu Lim	General Manager
eTELECARE GLOBAL SOLUTIONS, INC. 20/F, Citibank Sq., Eastwood Ave., Eastwood City, Cyberpark, Bagumbayan, Quezon City	Ingrid Karina Tamayo Gutierrez	Multilingual Customer Service Associate
WAXI TRADING LTD. CO. No. 3 G/F, 619 Asuncion St., Binondo, Manila	Shanshan LI	Operation Manager
PHILIPPINE HOTELIERS, INC. Dusit Hotel Nikko, Ayala Center, Makati City	Gerhard Friedrich Heinrich Kropp	President

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–February 6, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
San Fernando City

BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Provincial Government of La Union through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract:

Name of Contract : Construction of Pediatrics Ward Building
Location : La Union Medical Center, Nazareno, Agoo, La Union
Brief Description : Structural Works; Finishing Works; Doors & Windows; Plumbing Works; Electrical Works
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) : P8,516,422.89
Contract Duration : 150 calendar days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	February 12, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	February 12, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 14, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	February 16, 2007
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 19, 2007
6. Pre-Bid Conference	February 21, 2007
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 5, 2007

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at Provincial Capitol, San Fernando City, La Union, upon their submission of an LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of **P500.00** to the Provincial Treasurer's Office. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of **P17,035.00** to the Provincial Treasurer's Office.

The Provincial Government of La Union assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **GEOFFREY S. TILAN**
Provincial Administrator
BAC Chairman

(PDI–February 6, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Province of Cebu
BIDS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE - INFRASTRUCTURE
Cebu Capitol, Cebu City
Tel. No. 255-6123; Fax No. 253-3981

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Province of Cebu, through its Bids and Awards Committee-Infrastructure (BAC-INFRA), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contracts:

A. Road Asphalting:

General Information
Title : Road Improvement Projects 2007
Scope : Items of work include, but not limited to, asphalting, line ditching, cross drainage & slope protection

Particulars:

Package (Contract ID)	ABC (PhP)	Location & Road Sections	Plans and Bid Documents (PhP)
Package 1 PC-RA-07.01	55,854,502.39	**1st District, Mainland Cebu** 1. Campo 7 - Hayuran Rd., Minglanilla 2. Balirong - Alpaco Rd., Naga 3. Sangi - Balungag Rd., San Fernando 4. Ocaña - Napo - Puesto - Guadalupe Rd., Carcar 5. Perrelos - Can-asujan Rd., Carcar 6. Valencia - Buenavista Rd., Carcar	20,000.00
Package 2 PC-RA-07.02	146,959,631.56	**2nd District, Mainland Cebu** 1. Usmad - Cansuje Rd., Argao 2. Cambanua - Jomgao - Panadtaran Rd., Argao 3. Cawayan - Malones Rd., Dalaguete 4. Guiwang - Cabalongan Rd., Alcoy 5. Alcoy - Nug-as Rd., Alcoy 6. Boljo-on - Dalaydav - Sn. Antonio Rd., Boljo-on 7. Samboan - Cañang Rd., Samboan 8. Caceres Rd., Oslob 9. Luka - Tumalog - Canyang Rd., Oslob 10. Poblacion - Inambakan Falls Road, Ginatilan 11. Poblacion Alegria - Lepanto Rd., Alegria 12. Banhigan - Lambog Rd., Badian 13. Badian Cemetery Rd., Badian 14. Leon Ejercito Street, Badian 15. Dagatan Road, Badian 16. Sta. Cruz - Liki/Baha-baha Road, Ronda 17. Ylaya - Kantangkas - Pawa Rd., Dumanjug 18. Cogon - Lawa-an Rd., Dumanjug	50,000.00
Package 3 PC-RA-07.03	75,869,472.75	**3rd District, Mainland Cebu** 1. Japitan - Canduguy - Gilooteg Rd., Barili 2. Cabcaban - Cagay - Pani Rd., Barili 3. Pob. Gunting - Balao Section, Barili 4. Cagay - Kalubihan Rd., Barili 5. Esperanza - Tampa-an Rd., Alegunaan 6. Asturias - Aglugop Rd., Asturias 7. Mangga - Carmelo Rd., Tuburan 8. Tuburan Beach Rd., Tuburan	20,000.00
Package 4 PC-RA-07.04	93,441,176.31	**4th District, Mainland Cebu** 1. Maño - Cayam Rd., San Remegio 2. Poblacion Tominjao - Maya Rd., Daanbantayan 3. Bogo - Liberta - Odlot Rd., Bogo 4. Cai-anan - Ilihan Section, Tabogon 5. Poblacion, Tabogon 6. Dayhagon - Lamintak - Luy-a - Pob. Rd., Medellin 7. Curva - Tindog Provincial Road, Medellin	20,000.00
Package 5 PC-RA-07.05	25,461,316.93	**5th & 6th Districts, Mainland Cebu** 1. Sogod - Pansoy Rd., Sogod 2. Cantumog - Natmao-an Rd., Carmen 3. Balingasaw Provincial Road, Lilo-an	10,000.00
Package 6 PC-RA-07.06	38,301,795.70	**Bantayan Island** 1. Kankalibe - Atop-atop Prov'l. Rd., Bantayan 2. Bunakan Road, Madridejos	10,000.00
Package 7 PC-RA-07.07	59,700,500.91	**Camotes Island** 1. Sn. Francisco - Sta. Cruz-Caburgasan Rd., San Francisco 2. Sn. Francisco - Puertobello Rd., Sn. Francisco 3. Sn. Francisco - Santiago Rd., Sn. Francisco 4. Western Pob. - Adela Dean Paz Rd., Poro 5. Poro Altavista Rd., Poro	20,000.00

B. Construction of Bridges

General Information
Title :2007 CEBU PROVINCE PRIORITY BRIDGE RECONSTRUCTION PROJECTS
Scope :Reconstruction of Bridges

Package (Contract ID)	ABC (PhP)	Location & Road Sections	Plans and Bid Documents (PhP)
Package 1 PC-BR-07.01	6,880,167.00	**1st District, Mainland Cebu** 1. Bairan Bridge I, Bairan, Naga 2. Bairan Bridge II, Bairan, Naga 3. Baroca Bridge, Carcar 4. Napo Bridge, Carcar	4,000.00
Package 2 PC-BR-07.02	8,886,062.00	**2nd & 3rd District, Mainland Cebu** 1. Lepanto Bridge, Poblacion, Alegria 2. Ebo Bridge, Balamban	4,000.00
Package 3 PC-BR-07.03	17,463,059.00	**4th District, Mainland Cebu** 1. Purgason Bridge, Daanbantayan 2. Odlot Bridge I, Bogo 3. Odlot Bridge II, Bogo 4. Lapaz Banban Bridge, Bogo 5. Sagay Bridge II, Borbon 6. Dakit Bridge, Borgon	5,000.00
Package 4 PC-BR-07.03	17,598,703.00	**5th District, Mainalnd Cebu** 1. Ipil Bridge, Carmen 2. Cantumog - Natmao-an Bridge, Carmen 3. Balks Bridge, Tudela, Camotes Island 4. McArthur Bridge I, Tudela, Camotes Island 5. McArthur Bridge II, Tudela, Camotes Island 6. Saoran Bridge, Tudela Camotes Island 7. Adela Bridge, Poro, Camotes Island 8. San Jose Bridge I, Poro, Camotes Island 9. San Jose Bridge II, Poro, Camotes Island	5,000.00

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the ABC per package, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC-INFRA will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening and in the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC-INFRA will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Submission of Eligibility Documents/Statements and Screening, Bid and Performance Securities, Pre-Bidding Conferences, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract, shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of activities is as follows:

BAC-INFRA Activities	Schedule
1. Receipt from prospective bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	February 2-8, 2007
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	February 2-8, 2007
3. Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	February 8, 2007
4. Notice of Eligibility Check Results	February 9, 2007
5. Issuance of Plans and Bid Documents	February 12, 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference	February 15, 2007
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	February 21, 2007

The BAC-INFRA Secretariat will issue to prospective bidder's Eligibility Forms at the Provincial Engineer's Office, Capitol Compound, Cebu City, upon their submission of a Letter of Intent stating and specifying therein which projects they intend to undertake, and payment of non-refundable amount of Fifty Pesos (P50.00) for each project to the Cash Division. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to, and may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check from, the aforementioned address. For further inquiries, one may call the Secretariat at (032) 255-6123.

The Secretariat will issue Bidding Documents including Plans and Specifications only to bidders declared by the BAC-INFRA who are found to be eligible to bid, upon payment to the Cash Division a non-refundable amount as above-stated.

The Province of Cebu assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids, and reserves the right to reject any and all bids, declare a failure of bidding or not to award the contract.

(Sgd.) **ADOLFO V. QUIROGA**
Chairman

(PDI--Feb. 2, 4 & 6, 2007)

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City Council of Manila
Page A13

AIREEC's launch set in San Francisco, LA

THE 1ST ASIAN INTERNATIONAL REAL Estate Expo and Conference (AIREEC), which will be held in Manila in December this year, will be formally launched at the Embassy Suites in San Francisco, California on Feb. 6. AIREEC is also scheduled for a soft launch on Feb. 9 at the headquarters of the Philippine Consulate General in Los Angeles, from where some 450 delegates would take a chartered flight to Manila to attend the event slated at the Philippine International Convention Center on Dec. 6-10. AIREEC will likewise be launched in various other countries and continents to elicit massive participation from the global real estate industry and its surging second-home market worldwide. This promotional blitz also consists of roadshows and exhibits, where AIREEC sponsors can gain prominent market exposure in up to 15 countries and form part of the event's global marketing campaign, which includes online advertising. Other country launches are still being arranged for the rest of the year, which is being organized by the Expo and Conventions Promotion Inc (call 729-2477, e-mail info@aireec.com, or visit www.aireec.com).

"Dream the Impossible Dream
Reach the Unreachable Star"

We, the family of

Francisco S. Dizon

wish to express our deepest gratitude to those who comforted us in our time of grief, sent flowers, mass cards and gave donations to his favorite charitable organizations.

God Bless.

From,

His Loving Wife **Pacita**

His dedicated children:

Marilyn and **Richard Ferguson**
Francisco III (Boy) and **Elizabeth (Beth) Alvarez**
Jocelyn (Jojo) and † Donald Urieta
Madeline (Bebot) and **Jose (Joe) Marfori**
Philip (Sonny) and **Jacqueline (Jackie) Garcia**
Ronald (Ronnie)
Elizabeth (Betsy) and **Guillermo (Willie) Torres**
Catherine (Jeannie) and **Enrique Posas, MD**

At 9:23 p.m. on Saturday, 3 February 2007

Our Beloved

NIEVA (EVIE) GALAURAN JOAQUIN

After receiving last rites
was embraced by Our Loving Father
and taken Home.

Mother to **Nerissa, Arvin**, and **Ariel**
Grandmother to **Bianca**
Sister to **Gloria** and **Celia**
Sister-in-law to **Marino**

We who remain, give thanks for the lifetime she was allowed to share with us.

Her body lies in state at #23 San Baraquiel St., Punturin, Valenzuela City, M.M.

Interment will be on Thursday, 8 February 2007 at Holy Cross Memorial Park, after the 2:00 p.m. Mass at St. Joseph Church in Punturin.

Luningning G. Gerochi

Died in the Grace of our Lord
on February 4, 2007 at the age of 61.

Her bereaved husband **JOEMARI**, children **Pie** and **Alex**, **Jun** and **Joji**; grandchildren **Catrice**, **Jake**, **Camille**, **Javi** and **Janna**, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Nacional Memorial Homes, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Thursday, February 8, 2007 at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City after an 8:00 a.m. Mass.

PEPITO MENDOZA QUIOGUE

Peacefully joined our Creator and his wife *ELADIA BALTAZAR QUIOGUE* on February 3, 2007.

His beloved children **Delton** and **Linda, Lourdes** and **Marivic**; grandchildren **Adrian, Jay** and **Cheryl**, and **Katherine** and great-grandchild **Ben**, together with his relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel 3 of Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina.

Interment will be tomorrow, February 7, 2007 at Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

We design OBITUARIES for free.

LEE TEN

Peacefully joined her Creator
on February 5, 2007 at the age of 93.

Her bereaved children: **Manuel** & **Jane Chilip, William Sy** (†), **Marcela** & **Co Giok Su, Juanita** & **Cesar Hernandez, Lolita Sy** & **Delia Ong**; grandchildren and great-grandchildren; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at Capilla dela Virgen, Santuario de San Antonio Parish, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be at the Chinese Cemetery on a date to be announced later.

"The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul."

Psalm 23: 1-2

VIOLETA GONZALEZ GALVEZ

(February 15, 1923 - February 4, 2007)

To our Dearest Mama Violet,

Words cannot adequately express our profound love for you, and the deep sadness we face with the loss of your presence in our lives. Memories of our joyful lives with you will forever be in our hearts and minds. Thank you for your unconditional love, kindness, generosity, wisdom and strength.

With all our love.

Your loving husband, **Pepe**

Your loving children and their spouses: **Nellie, Suzanne** and **Alex, Christine, Marianne** and **Gabby, Joey** and **Tonda, Bettina** and **James**.

Your loving grandchildren and their spouses: **Adrian** & **Zarah, Trina** & **Toto, Amabelle** & **Michael, Tani** & **Giorgio, Michelle, John, Roxanne, Jasmine, JJ, Jonathan, Gabrielle, Maria**, and **Alyssa.**

Your loving great-grandchildren: **Alexis, Kyle, Aren**, and **Ansel**.

Please pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Capilla del Señor, Sanctuario de San Antonio Parish, McKinley Road, Forbes Park, Makati. Mass will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, February 9, 2007.

PERFECTO "LITO" DIZON-MENDOZA

of Dagupan City and San Pedro, Laguna

Peacefully joined the Lord
on February 5,2007 at the age of 73.

His wife **Alice**, his children **Oyie, Grace, Gene, Ada, Amilet, Sonnyboy, Anthony, Lizza, Mylene, Noreen, Mike** and **Chie**; his sons/daughters-in-law, grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Divine Mercy Viewing Chapel, Tunasan, Muntinlupa City.

Interment will be announced later.

LA FUNERARIA PAZ, INC.

Tel. Nos. 712-3001 • 749-3806 to 11

NAME OF DECEASED	PLACE OF VIEWING	INTERMENT/CREMATION	
		DATE & TIME	PLACE
LUISA PAULINO	Chapel A Quezon City	February 6, 2007 4:00 AM	transfer to Bacolod City
BONIFACIO G. RESUELLO	Chapel C Quezon City	February 7, 2007 2:00 PM	Eternal Gardens Memorial Park

"There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heaven..." Ecclesiastes 3:11

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

BUSINESS

Treasury bill rates for all maturities fall to all-time lows

By Michelle V. Remo

TREASURY BILL RATES ACROSS ALL maturities continued to drop hitting new all-time lows yesterday, prompting the government to consider raising its short-term debt offering.

"The last three auctions presented an overwhelming evidence of huge demand for treasury bills," National Treasurer Omar Cruz told reporters in a briefing after yesterday's auction. Yesterday's bidding was the third straight time the T-bill rates hit new all-time lows.

The 91-day bills, used as the benchmark in pricing bank loans, fell to 3.008 percent or 16.3 basis points lower than the 3.171 percent posted in the last auction two weeks ago.

The strong demand for the three-month debt paper can be seen from the huge volume of bids, which reached P4.38 billion yesterday as against the government's offering of only P500 million. The Bureau of the Treasury's auction committee decided to accept P700 million worth of bids.

The rate for the 182-day bills hit 3.47 percent, dropping by 19.2 basis points from the previous rate of 3.66 percent.

The six-month bills got the biggest bid of P12 billion, also much higher than the government's offering of only P1.5 billion.

The auction committee was convinced to increase its debt offering and accept P2.1 billion worth of bids.

The rate for the 364-day bills dropped by 22 basis points to 3.998 percent from the previous rate of 4.218 percent.

Bids for the one-year debt instruments hit P10.71 billion, more than five times the debt offering of only P2 billion. Some P2.8 billion worth of bids were accepted.

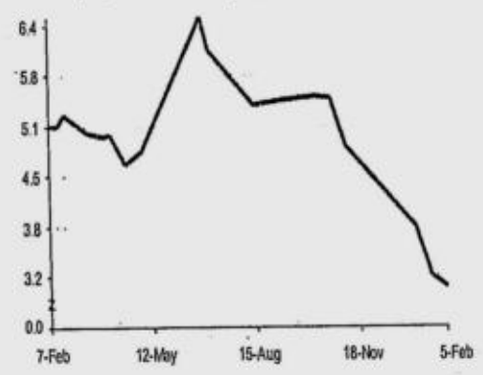
Cruz said the BTr was studying whether to increase its programmed T-bill issuances for the first quarter, given the huge market demand for such government securities.

Under the domestic borrowing program for the first quarter of 2007, the government will issue P63 billion worth of treasury bills and bonds to the domestic market.

The national treasurer said accepting more bids than the original plan for the first quarter was meant to partly address huge demand for the virtually risk-free government securities.

Also, Cruz said the government had opened a tap facility to accommodate more T-bill buyers. In the tap, which will be open until 3 p. m. today, the government will sell P4 billion additional T-bills over the counter.

"We are responding to the market outcry for more issuances. The market is nudging us to borrow more at these low rates," he said.



NDC to float ₱10B worth of bonds for infra projects

MRT3-LRT1 interconnection a priority project for funding

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT Co. is planning to float another P10 billion worth of local bonds this year to fund key infrastructure projects.

Economic Planning Secretary Romulo Neri told reporters that NDC had an existing authority to issue as much as P20 billion worth of peso-denominated bonds and that only P10 billion of which was used last year.

"We'll float another P10 billion to finance projects such as the interconnection of the MRT3 and LRT1, then we will see how we could finance the LRT1 to Cavite extension," Neri said.

Proceeds from the P10-billion bond float last year were earmarked for the infrastructure support projects in the agricultural sector, specifically the construction of roads and provision of irrigation systems that would make available about two million hectares of new land for agriculture.

If the implementation of the expanded value added tax was the single most important reform that brought good tidings to the Philippines last year, Neri said the positive catalyst for this year would be "hard" and "soft" infrastructure, the latter referring to the regulatory environment for infrastructure-related sectors such as power, shipping, port, and airline.

The MRT3-LRT1 loop involves the construction of a 5.4-kilometer elevated seamless line from the Monumento station of LRT line 1 to North Ave Station of Line 3. It also includes the construction of three new stations in Balintawak, Roosevelt, and North Avenue along Edsa.

The project, approved by the National Economic Development Authority and Cabinet-level Investment Coordination Committee last Nov. 28, would cost about P6.4 billion. Construction is targeted to begin this year for completion in 2010.

While the global donor community has recently been more interested in extending official development assistance to the Philippines, Neri said the country should also use local funds for its infrastructure requirements instead of embarking on a foreign borrowing binge.

"We have to be careful also. Financing is not the problem. We have to make sure that the money goes to good projects and efficiently-priced projects," Neri said.

He said the country's biggest challenge this year after attaining a fiscal turnaround would be microeconomic reforms.

"We need to fast track both soft and hard infrastructure. The hard infrastructure refers to the roads, bridges, ports and airports," he explained.

PSTC earmarks ₱900M for double-hull tankers

By Abigail L. Ho

PNOC SHIPPING AND TRANSport Corp. is earmarking about P900 million to acquire two double-hull tankers, as it prepares for a possible initial public offering in 2009.

Pedro Aquino Jr., officer in charge at parent firm Philippine National Oil Co., said the acquisition of the two vessels was considered one of the company's priority projects for 2007.

"This is still in line with the privatization efforts for PSTC," he said.

He said that according to financial adviser Punongbayan and Araullo, selling the company as is would fetch only about P360 million as its existing tankers were already old.

Acquiring two new vessels this year, he said, would boost the value of the company to around P1.3 billion and would make it more suitable for public listing.

He added that the new vessels would also be contracted to Petron Corp. for a period of 10 years, assuring the company of steady income.

"Contracts usually last between three and four years, but since Petron will be the first to invest in our double-hull tankers, we'll give it a good deal, something that will last 10 years," he said.

Financing for the vessels would come from Development Bank of the Philippines, he said, with PSTC's vessels plus their corresponding contracts as collateral.

Within four to five years, he said PSTC would have already paid for the two vessels in full.

By 2010, after the planned 2009 IPO, he said PSTC was keen on acquiring another two double-hull tankers, each costing around P450 million.

Tankers carrying heavy-grade liquid fuels or toxic materials are required to have double hulls by 2015, according to the United Nations' International Maritime Organization.

Gov't urged to set standards for aquaculture

By Ronnel W. Domingo

FISHERIES ADVOCACY GROUP TAMBUYOG Development Center has called on the government to adopt strict standards for aquaculture to avert social and environmental crises that might result from the importation of a controversial foreign species of shrimp.

Tambuyog executive director Arsenio Tanchuling said standards in best aquaculture practices must be established to serve as operating guidelines for investors to protect communities from the negative impacts of commercial aquaculture operations.

Tanchuling said big commercial operations in shrimp farming were expected to proliferate now that the government had allowed the importation of high-yield species like the Pacific white shrimp or Penaus vannamei.

He noted that in the 1970s and 1980s, the expansion of shrimp aquaculture resulted in the massive destruction of mangrove areas and the dislocation of small fishers from mangrove and coastal fishing grounds.

Tanchuling said the development of standards should begin in areas where intensive shrimp operations and mariculture parks were in operation or planned.

The Department of Agriculture recently lifted the ban on the importation of the Pacific white shrimp. Tambuyog had resisted importation of the species, saying these were not properly tested for diseases.

In 2001, the DA banned P.vannamei importation to protect the local sugpo or black tiger prawn from the dreaded Taura virus.

Aboitiz, partner commit to develop Magat plant

ILAGAN, ISABELA—ABOITIZ Equity Ventures Inc.-Statkraft Norfund Power Invest of Norway (SN Power) consortium has committed to develop the 360-megawatt Magat hydro power plant to ensure the continuous power and irrigation supplies in Isabela, Ifugao and Quirino.

"We are committed to develop the power plant. There are problems such as massive siltation but this can be addressed once we establish [an office] here probably by June this year," said Miguel Aboitiz, the consortium's adviser, in a recent visit here.

Aboitiz said all business and franchise taxes would be paid to the government when the consortium started operating the plant.

The Isabela and Ifugao governments earlier agreed to divide the P20-million franchise tax earlier paid by National Power Corp. for operating the Magat power plant in Barangay Aguinaldo in Ramon town. The amount is held in escrow at Land Bank of the Philippines.

Records showed the Isabela government had told a local court in 1996 that the operators of the Magat plant should pay Isabela a franchise tax as it was located in the province and not in nearby Ifugao.

In 1992 and 1993, Napocor paid P9.47 million and P7.12 million, respectively, to Ifugao because of the latter's claim of jurisdiction over the plant site.

The Ifugao government said the province maintained the plant, as the watershed feeding the plant's reservoir was in the province.

In a meeting with irrigation officials in Ramon town last month, Ifugao Gov. Glenn Prudenciano and Rep. Solomon Chungalao appealed for the immediate release of the franchise taxes.

"We are not demanding the moon and the stars. We are only asking for a fair and equitable share due us," Chungalao said. *Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon*

HYDRO POWER COMPLEX TURNOVER
PSALM president Nieves L. Osorio chats with Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla and First Gen vice chair and CEO Peter D. Garrucho Jr. during the turnover ceremonies for the 112-MW Pantabangan-Masiway hydro complex. First Gen won the bidding for the hydro plant with an offer of $129 million.

Petrochem zone now open to biodiesel projects

INVESTORS KEEN ON ENTERING THE AL ternative fuels business can now consider putting up their facilities within PNOC Alternative Fuels Corp.'s petrochemical complex in Bataan.

PNOC-AFC president Peter Anthony Abaya said that previously, only petrochemical projects could be established inside the 530-hectare industrial estate in Limay and Mariveles, Bataan.

However, the Office of the Government Corporate Counsel issued an opinion which effectively opened up the complex to projects involving alternative fuels, such as bio-diesel and bio-ethanol.

According to the OGCC opinion, alternative fuels could also be considered as a petrochemical-related activity.

PNOC-AFC aims to produce 1 million metric tons (MT) or 870 million liters a year of biodiesel from jatropha starting 2010.

To reach this target, PNOC-AFC, together with private sector partners, should establish nurseries and plantations covering a total area of 1,500 hectares and 700,000 hectares, respectively.

It should also put up refineries with capacities ranging from 60,000 MT to 240,000 MT a year. Each of these refineries should be serviced by plantations with a size of 30,000 hectares for a 60,000-MT plant and 120,000 hectares for a 240,000-MT facility.

PNOC-AFC is currently negotiating with 17 prospective joint venture partners for the establishment of jatropha plantations and refineries with a total capacity of 2 million MT a year. *Abigail L. Ho*

Economy expected to sustain growth momentum this year

BRITISH BANK STANDARD Chartered is expecting the Philippines to be able to sustain economic growth momentum this year despite the expected slowdown in the US economy, which may weigh down on the country's export performance.

"We're quite optimistic on the Philippine economy because domestic demand is firm. Consumption will be supported by strong inflows of OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances, government infrastructure projects and greater private sector involvement through foreign direct investments," Hong Kong-based Stanchart economist Frances Cheung said during a recent visit to Manila.

With the possible economic slowdown in the United States, Cheung said Philippine export growth might drop to 6.8 percent this year from last year's 16 percent. The country's trade performance, she added, might also be affected by the peaking of the tech cycle. "The good news is Japan is doing well, so it could take up the slack in the US demand," Cheung said.

Overall, she expects the Philippines to post a gross domestic product growth of 4.7 percent this year and 4.5 percent next year. Sound economic fundamentals are seen allowing the peso to outperform other currencies in the region. After appreciating sharply for two straight years, Cheung said the peso would likely stabilize at 48 to $1 level this quarter but pull back to the 50-to-$1 levels in the following quarters. However, the peso is seen to gain strength again toward the end of the year. By 2008, the economist is expecting the peso to go back to the 48-to-$1 level.

Cheung said she was not expecting any contagion from the Bank of Thailand's surprise move to curb capital inflows, noting that central banks in the region would, instead, most likely liberalize restrictions on capital outflows. She said liberalizing capital outflows was the way forward. It is being pursued by the central banks of Korea and China to curb the appreciation of their currencies.

On the monetary side, Stanchart expects the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to cut its overnight borrowing rate from 7.5 percent to 6.75 percent by the end of the year for a total of 75 basis points, starting in the second quarter.

"With the effects of the expanded VAT (expanded value added tax) fading, oil prices stabilizing and assuming that there will be no major supply disruption in agricultural products, headline inflation should edge down gradually, averaging 4.8 percent in 2007," she said.

In the meantime, Cheung said there remained key risks that might affect the economy, including the political developments in the run-up to the elections.

"The risk, which seems not particularly high though, is if (Pres. Gloria Macapagal-) Arroyo's hold of power turns more fragile leading to abrupt change in the government, then investor confidence could be negatively affected," she added. *Doris C. Dumlao*

IN THIS ISSUE
Staying healthy the easy way /C3

LIFESTYLE
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WELL AND GOOD
Tina Juan

Let research help you slim down in 2007

WEIGHT LOSS RESEARCH DONE IN 2006 CAN help you have a slimmer silhouette in 2007. Some studies offer a new insight into losing excess pounds, others confirm what we already know, and a few had conflicting results.

Daily weigh-in

Unless you have a history of eating disorders or an obsession with your weight, a daily weigh-in can help you lose more pounds than a weekly hop on the scale.

Graph your weight to see an upward or downward trend. Be aware that small fluctuations are normal due to fluid shifts in the body. An increase of two or three pounds means you need to cut back on calories and increase physical activity.

Overtime snacking

Overtime office work can make women fat because the stress from working overly long hours seems to increase cravings for snacks that are full of fat and sugar.

This is a form of self-medication. These high-calorie treats boost the release of mood-enhancing substances in the brain. Now you know why chocolate seems to be the "solution" to all your problems.

Cravings

British researchers found that brain-challenging activities like crossword puzzles were more effective at overcoming sudden cravings for sweets and snacks than activities like knitting that let your mind wander.

The next time you feel the urge for something decadent, whip out a Sudoku booklet. You could call this strategy "mind over mouth."

Trans-fat

Trans-fat from processed foods like cookies, crackers, and chips may add more pounds than animal fat and fat from olive oil, canola oil, nuts and seeds, for instance. Trans-fat is found in food made with hydrogenated oil (check nutrition labels at the back of food products).

Monkeys fed diets with 8 percent trans-fat gained three times more weight than those given food without trans-fat but with the same amount of calories. The same could be true for humans since monkeys and humans metabolize fat the same way.

LET RESEARCH/ C4

Get new insight from recent studies on how to lose weight

CLIP & SAVE
EXERCISE OF THE WEEK

One-arm lateral raise

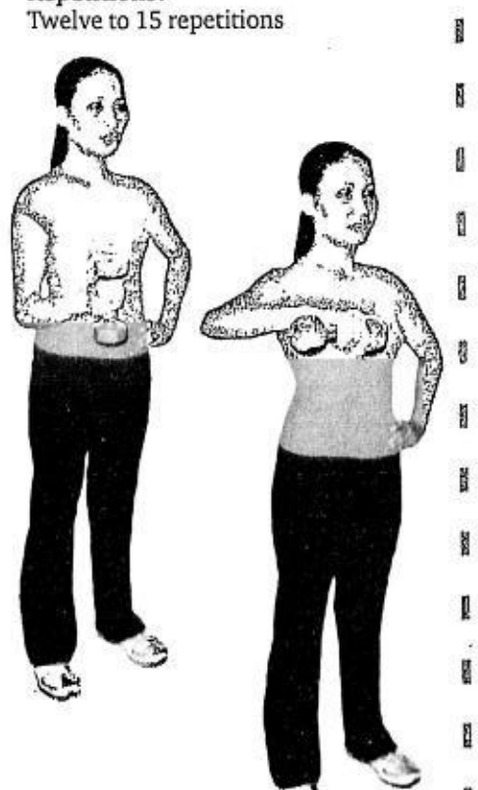
STRENGTHENS THE MIDDLE portion of the deltoids or shoulders (since it is one-sided, it also challenges the core muscles).

Equipment:
Dumbbells

Exercise technique:
1. Stand with feet just slightly apart with one hand on your hip and a dumbbell in the other hand.
2. Raise your arm to shoulder level.
3. Return to starting position.
4. Do the desired number of repetitions. Repeat on the other side.

Performance tips:
1. Do not raise your arm higher than shoulder level to avoid injury to the shoulder joint.
2. Lightly contract your torso muscles to stabilize yourself as you raise and lower your arm.
3. Exhale when you raise your arm; inhale when you lower it.

Repetitions:
Twelve to 15 repetitions



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part-time or full-time; students, housewives, unemployed, sales professionals, entrepreneurs, businessmen, etc.
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e-mail feedback at arts@inquirer.com.ph

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2007

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

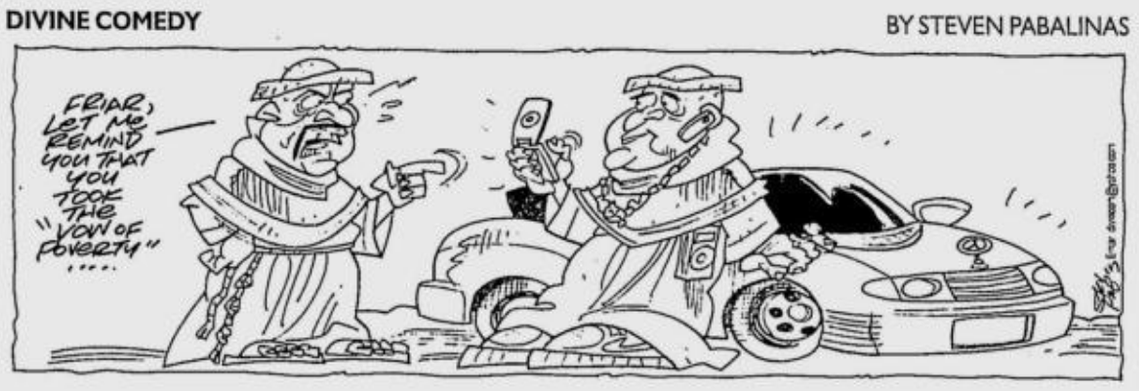
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

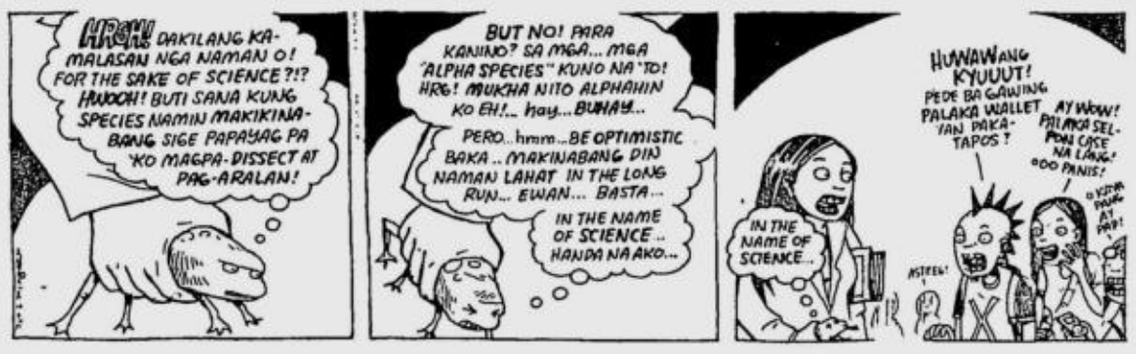
LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

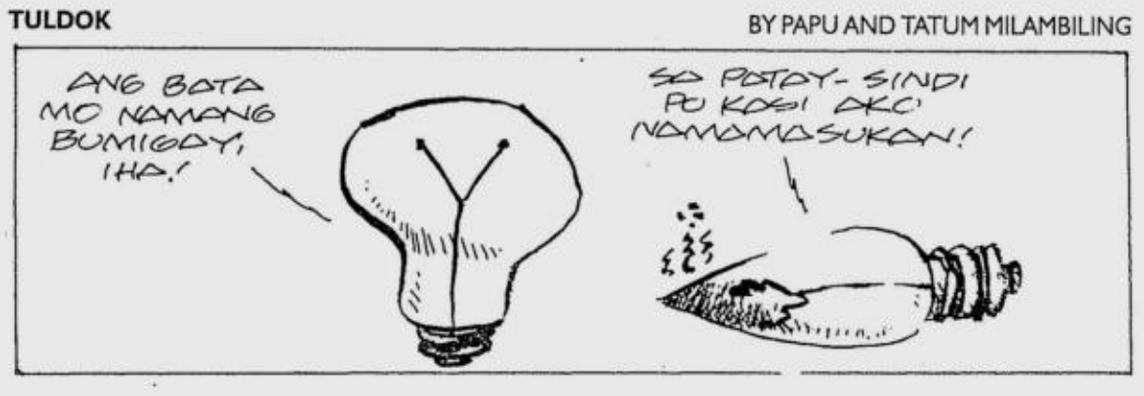


KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA



MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING

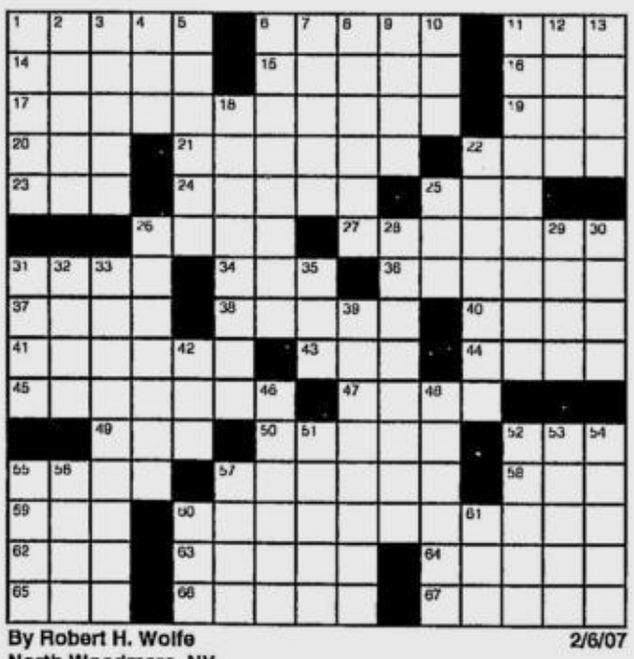


BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD

ACROSS
1 Bicycle part
6 Twilight times
11 Ran into
14 Legend maker
15 Old Roman port
16 Rhea relative
17 Female court cases?
19 Beak
20 Shade tree
21 Remove NaCl
22 Nick and Nora's dog
23 Susan of "L.A. Law"
24 Awry, in a way
25 Little white lie
26 Govern
27 Eagles, often
31 Exile isle
34 Assn.
36 Words before a coin toss
37 __ Rapids, MN
38 Milo of "The Verdict"
40 James of R&B
41 Kansas City club
43 Neighbor of Syr.
44 Mach breakers
45 Off-the-neck hairdo
47 Slapstick ammo
49 Give in to gravity
50 Brings in
52 Saturate
55 Gambit
57 Vanquish
58 Coloration
59 Mythical bird
60 Female brief films?
62 Wapiti
63 Locales
64 Turn inside out
65 __ de deux
66 Brought on
67 Lawn tools

DOWN
1 Touched clumsily
2 French school
3 Face-up hand
4 "__ You Lonesome Tonight?"
5 Type of carriage
6 Personnel records
7 Regular
8 Long-legged wading birds
9 Songstress Eartha
10 Nordic carrier's letters
11 Male hard blows?
12 Give off
13 Brass band member
18 Free
22 Like a vacuum
25 Govt. air-safety grp.
26 Fled
28 Globular flutes
29 "Norma Rae" director Martin
30 RR depots
31 Light tan
32 Kind of hole?
33 Male hard blows?
35 Alphabet trio
39 Coffee order
42 Tour segment
46 Took a look
48 Swimmer Williams
51 G-sharp
52 Animated ogre
53 Bizarre
54 Nuisances
55 Spadework
56 The Kinks 1970 hit
57 Dreadful
60 Lass
61 Eggs



By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

2/6/07

Monday's Puzzle Solved

S	C	U	M	■	V	I	L	E	■	C	H	I	M	P
L	A	N	E	■	E	D	E	N	■	H	I	D	E	S
I	N	C	A	■	L	E	A	D	■	A	T	L	A	S
P	O	U	N	D	C	A	K	E	■	S	P	E	L	T
S	E	T	T	E	R	■	■	D	A	T	A	■	■	■
■	■	■	M	O	S	S	■	C	E	R	E	A	L	■
L	A	S	S	O	■	W	A	L	E	■	A	X	L	E
I	D	O	L	■	S	A	L	E	S	■	D	I	E	T
E	Z	R	A	■	A	P	E	D	■	M	E	T	E	S
D	E	E	P	L	Y	■	M	A	R	Y	■	■	■	■
■	■	■	S	O	S	O	■	■	E	T	C	H	E	D
S	A	N	T	A	■	P	U	N	C	H	L	I	N	E
P	L	A	I	T	■	T	R	E	E	■	A	P	S	E
A	I	T	C	H	■	E	G	O	S	■	S	P	U	D
S	T	O	K	E	■	D	E	N	S	■	H	O	E	S

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2/6/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have excellent social skills, and you're well-liked. You can schmooze with the best of them! You enjoy being popular (because you have a knack for touching a sympathetic chord in others). In large measure, this is why people respond to you. Get ready for one of the best years of your life. Fortune favors you now. Open any door!
Birthdate of: Kathy Najimy, actress; Bob Marley, reggae musician; Tom Brokaw, TV journalist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): The Moon is opposite your sign today, and this draws your attention to others. You will have to go more than halfway in all your dealings with people. (No big deal.)

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Make a list of what you want to accomplish today. That way you might get at least two or three items done. This is a good day to take care of little details.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): This can be a playful, creative day for you. Actually, you can make it whatever you want, because there are no planetary restrictions, which is rather unusual.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Focus on home, family and domestic issues today. You might have to deal with real estate matters as well. Discussions with a parent could be significant.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Short trips, errands and conversations with siblings keep you running today. This is also an excellent day to read, write or study. You're in a curious frame of mind!

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Pay attention to financial matters. Many of you are shopping today. You might also have good moneymaking ideas.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Today the Moon is in your sign, making you a bit more emotional about everything. However, it also brings you a little bit of extra good luck.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Try to get some downtime just for yourself today. You need to appreciate some solitude in beautiful surroundings. This gives you a chance to pull your thoughts together

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Seek out a friend today for an important discussion. Someone needs to confide in you, or perhaps vice versa. Talk to others about your goals and dreams for the future.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Because the Moon is very high in your chart today, others will briefly notice you for some reason. Conversations with bosses, parents and teachers could also be significant.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Try to do something different or out of the ordinary today. You need to expand your horizons. You want adventure! You're hungry to learn something new.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Today you will have to appreciate the fact that someone else's values do not reflect your own. It looks like you're just going to have to agree to disagree.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

			6	3	4			
2		1				9		3
	3						4	
7				5				2
8			9	6	3			4
3				2				8
	2						8	
9		5				7		6
			5	8	7			

Difficulty Level ★★

2/06

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

4	3	7	9	1	2	8	6	5
5	6	9	7	8	3	1	4	2
1	8	2	5	6	4	9	7	3
9	7	5	2	3	6	4	8	1
2	4	8	1	9	7	5	3	6
3	1	6	4	5	8	2	9	7
6	9	1	3	4	5	7	2	8
8	2	4	6	7	1	3	5	9
7	5	3	8	2	9	6	1	4

Difficulty Level ★

VICKY Zubiri welcomes each day as a blessing.

MAN of the hour Carlos "Bobong" Velez and brilliant Dolores F. Cheng

SULTRY Viva Hot Babes Katya Santos and Jennifer Lee, with Bobong V.

TV'S Marc Nelson and Miss Earth 2004 Priscilla Meirelles

ART Hyndman, fun Denise Ysmael Lacson and Diether Ocampo

NANCY Harel, Bheng Loretizo, Edwin Aguilar, Kris Alcantara and Ann Kuy

ROCSON Chang, Liza Gonzales, Jay Malabuyoc, Queen Dy Guani, Asia Gamu, Docker Cavestany and Bheng Loretizo

AMBASSADOR Joey Antonio with Virginia and Gerard Lane

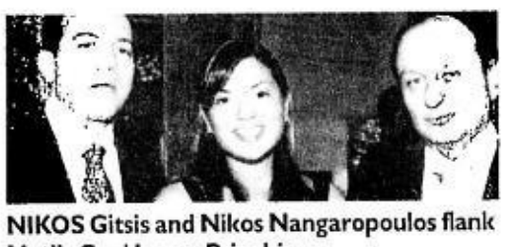
ROCSON Chang, Ambassador Lim Kheng Hua, Lee Foo Tuck and Ian Mathay

Grand opening salvo for 2007

PEDRO Roxas with P.L. and Madeleine Lim

AXEL Favre, Helena Alvarez and Mercedes Pagalday

JESSIE Hubertz, Robert "Bobbie" Romulo, Bambi Harper and Anton Roxas



NIKOS Gitsis and Nikos Nangaropoulos flank Mati's Geni Lopez Psinakis

FRANK Sr. and Pamen Elizalde and Martha and Frank de Burgh

DAVID Batchelor, and Stella and Jorge Araneta

JOHNNY and Nancy Sy with Peter Coyuito

SUSAN Reyes, Tessie Luz, Criselda Lontok, Evelyn Lim Forbes, Mary Tuason and Ching Montinola

BOLING Reyes, INQUIRER chair Marixi Prieto, Doodie and Conkoy Tuason

BACK ROW: David E.T. Lim, Cristobelle Liao, Batchelor, Michael Kadoorie, Charles L. Morris, Clement Kwok and Peter C. Borer.
Front row: Felipe Yap, Fernando Zobel, Teresa Chan-Sola, Ian Boyce and Peter Go

MARIO Katigbak, Mel Meer, Diane Jean Lopez, *moi*, Irene Martel Francisco and Miguel de Leon

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen on Kodak Max

NORTHWEST's Gina Campos and KLM's Ihab Sorial

THE GRAND NEW YEAR'S BASH AT THE strip in Greenbelt 2 was a tremendous hit among those who wanted a special way to welcome 2007, *palanggas*.

Some 5,000 personas attended the awesome event, including hotshot personalities like **Sam Milby** and **Say Alonzo** of "Pinoy Big Brother" fame; sweethearts **Jeff Rodriguez** of Powerboys and former beauty queen **Tisha Silang**, who were obviously very much in love; **Pops Fernandez** and **Jomari Yllana**, plus so many others too beautiful to mention, dahlings.

Tons of wine and spirits flowed till way past 5 a.m., complementing signature dishes of the Strip's restaurants. Everyone shook, rattled and rolled to the hot beat of world-renowned DJs **Jermaine Brown** of Canada, **Kevin Ruiz** of New York and **Elian Habayeb** of the House of Love Records.

There was also a dramatic balloon drop, dahlings.

Due to the bash's huge success, **Carlos "Bobong" Velez** promised more surprises and dance-till-you-drop events.

"It was a first here in Greenbelt 2. A party of this magnitude has never been staged this side of the metro. Well, now we know it can be done. Revelers can look forward to bigger festivities in 2007," said a very pleased Bobong V.

The event was jointly undertaken by tenants of the Strip and Ayala Greenbelt Malls. It was produced and organized by Reverie Communications Services and House of Love, among others, dahlings.

Cover girl

Ultra-glam **Vicky Zubiri**, one of Cosmo Manille's top personalities, lover of the good life and a talented woman, reveals herself in the gorgeous cover story of the February issue of Philippine Tatler Magazine, *palanggas*.

In this daring pictorial and interview, Vicky openly shares her life, especially after she was diagnosed with a life-threatening disease that led to a brain operation. Through it all, Vicky has proved exemplary, accepting her condition with grace and elegance, and without anger and bitterness.

She is a full-time wife to Bukidnon Gov. Joe Zubiri, a fab mother to her children that include Rep. Miguel Zubiri and, *naturellement*, grandmother to several grandchildren.

When daughter **Stephanie** was married to a Frenchman not more than a year ago, Vicky designed beautiful Filipiniana gowns for the bride and the rest of the female entourage, showing the best of Filipino craftsmanship.

That's not surprising, dahlings, considering she was the other half in the highly successful Victoria II shop and boutique that was patronized by Manille's cosmopolitan ladies. And, in case you don't know, this Assumption graduate also paints.

Yes, *palanggas*, she teaches us how to triumph over adversity through faith, perseverance and the "Vicky way"—enjoying to the hilt every second of life.

Pen is 30

Jags, Benzes, BMWs and whatever had wheels rolled to the entrance of the Peninsula Manila for the grand and glitzy 30th anniversary of the hotel and the unveiling of its elegant, chic new look *après* a renovation.

The fantastic one-of-a-kind cocktail party was led by the host, Sir **Michael Kadoorie**, chair of the Hong Kong and Shanghai Hotels Limited (HSH), no less.

The creamiest of the cream of Cosmopolitan Manille society, politicians, taipans and business magnates were welcomed by Sir Michael at the newly renovated lobby.

For one remarkable evening, *palanggas*, over 1,000 awesome invited guests dined on oysters and *foie gras*, sipped Veuve Clicquot champagne while swinging to Big Band music played by the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra.

In his short welcome speech, Sir Michael said: "The Peninsula Manila holds a special place in the development of our hotels, being the first hotel outside of our Hong Kong flagship to be opened under the Peninsula brand name. Today, it is part of a group that is internationally recognized for its high standards of service and distinctive approach to hospitality."

On behalf of HSH and The Peninsula Manila, Sir Michael also announced that P2 million was donated to the Philippine National Red Cross for relief programs for Typhoon Reming victims in Bicol.

The crowd included CEO **Clement K.M. Kwok**; COO **Peter C. Borer** and director **Ian Boyce**; Manila Pen honorary chair **P. L. Lim** and loveable wife, **Madeleine**; **David E.T. Lim**; **Patxi** and **Sofia Zobel**; gorgeous **Maricris Cardenas Zobel**; **Pitoy Moreno**; eye-catching **Menchu Menchaca Soriano**; **Ronnie Concepcion**; **Abe** and **Nini Licaros**; Rustan's chic designer **Criselda Lontoc Fernandez**; **Arturo** and **Tessie Luz**; Dr. **Danny** and **Ising Madrigal-Vasquez**; **Mercedes Tuason**; **Lourdes Montinola**; vivacious **Marivic Madrigal Vasquez**; **Teresa Chan-Sola**, plus tons and tons of old and new wealth people, *palanggas*.

On the road

I always look forward to the Singapore Tourism Board-Philippines' (STB-P) truly unique and exciting projects, *palanggas*. So there was *moi* at the super fun launch of "Uniquely Singapore Destination Roadshows" in one of Manille's premier malls, The Podium.

The event featured a life-size replica of the Lion City's famous Merlion and the beautiful Singapore skyline for backdrop that left us breathless, dahlings.

There was the ever-debonair and dashing STB area director for the Philippines and Brunei **Rocson Chang**, being his usual *charmant* self. Beside him was vice president of finance and administration of Keppel Properties Philippines, **Lee Foo Tuck**, and the guest of honor, Ambassador **Lim Kheng Hua**.

Attendees enjoyed the outstanding performance of the much-admired Halili Ballet Group that gave a modern twist to classical ballet.

The roadshows will give Filipino shoppers a glimpse of holidays in Singapore and a chance to visit the island state, *palanggas*. At the Podium and several other malls, 20 awesome round-trip tickets to Singapore and 20 Uniquely Singapore Limited-Edition Monopoly sets are up for grabs at each establishment.

Give STB-P a buzz at 8134969 and check out what's in store for you in bustling Singapore, *palanggas*.

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

The easy-to-do health guide

DO YOU KNOW THAT YOUR BODY is being invaded by free radicals at least 10,000 times a day?

These molecules caused by poor diet, stress, chemicals (preservatives, flavoring, coloring), pollution, etc. burn through the protective membranes of cells and destroy them.

By so doing, they mutate your body's cellular DNA, thus crippling it—eventually leading to illness.

What do we do to arm ourselves against marauders? Here are some tips to fortify our nutritional protective armor:

• Antioxidant boosters

Out of 22 common vegetables researched by the Jean Mayer USDA Human Nutrition Research Center on Aging, Tufts University, the top nine are kale, beets, red bell peppers, brussel sprouts, broccoli flowers, potatoes, sweet potatoes, corn.

Supplements can also help—A, C, E, selenium, co-enzyme Q10 (an affordable brand available in the market is called Addlife by Pascual Laboratories).

• Brain strengthener

Protect your brain by eating more strawberries and spinach. With high vitamin E levels, they can help delay the aging of your brain.

• Think extra virgin

Coconut and olive oil should be a part of your daily diet. Best taken fresh and uncooked, these oils are rich in nutrients. If it is olive oil you prefer, make sure it is the color green, meaning cold-pressed and not exposed to heat.

• Think dark colors

Eat broccoli that is so dark it is almost purple. The indole 3 carbinol in it may help prevent breast and cervical cancer. Blackberries contain ellagic acid that helps prevent cellular changes.

• Go naked

Produce that is stripped of chemicals, fertilizers, free of pesticides is organically grown. Called naked produce, it guarantees your body relief from toxic build-up.

• Cut the sugar

If you have a sugar craving, have a fruit. Or eat a sweet potato. If this works for you each time you have a sugar craving, then always have them on stand-by.

• Try soy

Now called super youth food, this humble bean may lower "bad" LDL cholesterol and prevent uterine/breast cancer. Whether soy milk, tofu or tempeh (fermented), soy is just as good for you.

• Follow the palm technique

If you have difficulty remembering how much meat and vegetables you should have, always use your palm. Eat only as much meat as can fit in the palm of your hand. And eat four "palm-fuls" of veggies says Vincent C. Grampapa, president, Longevity Institute International.

• Go Greek

If you follow the Greek diet, you would have your fill of mono-unsaturated fats from nuts like pumpkin, sunflower seeds, walnuts, almonds that are rich in omega 6.

• Go fishing

Eat more fish like tuna, cod, salmon, snapper, sardines, mackerel than meat that are high in omega 3 fatty acids.

• Go fatty with fruit

Avocado has oleic acid (also found in olive oil).

• Stay cool

Water helps the body in many ways. Apart from hydrating the system, it cleanses and detoxifies bladder and colon. Health is assured by drinking 8-12 glasses daily. Also, try coconut water that acts as a diuretic (increases the volume of urine promoting the excretion of salts and water from the kidneys) and can cleanse your system.

If your urine is not clear or pale yellow, drink up! If you feel washed-up at the end of the day, water ought to banish your body aches and pains as it prevents muscle soreness.

• Move your butt

Stay active instead of passive. Keep moving. Have a regular exercise regimen.

• Be happy

Even if you feel that happiness eludes you, remember, it is simply a state of mind. You can choose to stay on the bright side or live in darkness.

Healthy beauty regimen

Mix half a glass of coconut water with half a glass fresh carrot juice. Drink it with positive thoughts in your head. Affirm: "A glass of juice for better health, with every sip, more strength!"

Take the carrot fibers left behind from the blendered veggie and scrub your body from face to toes. It's your vitamin A skin treat.

Remember, big wonders begin with little wonders. So start today.

Love and light!

Reference: "Age Erasing Secrets," Kevin Ireland

ET has called Earth home?

INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

EACH SOUL THAT INCARNATES ON Earth brings with it memories of its life's sojourns or travels in other planetary systems and galaxies.

Many people are not originally from this planet. Most are extraterrestrials (ET) from other worlds.

This is the extraordinary thesis of American researcher Scott Mandelker, who wrote the book "From Elsewhere, Being ET in America." According to him, humans have been seeded into Earth to nourish and develop this planet for habitation by other life forms at some future date.

Many beings from other galaxies have been migrating to this planet for thousands of years completely unknown to others, even to themselves.

We can detect these ETs among us if we are sensitive and discerning enough. These ETs do not hold the same values most earth people have. They do not conform easily to outward pressures. They have a mind of their own and they think in ways that separate them from the rest of humanity.

They are pioneers who change the course of events on this planet, whether in terms of new thoughts or ideas, new inventions or gadgets, new religion, new ways of relating to people.

Sometimes regarded as weird, they can rarely be ignored. Men and women of extraordinary other-worldly talents and skills include such beings as Nikola Tesla, William Shakespeare, Socrates, Benjamin Franklin, Abraham Lincoln, Francis Bacon, Ramses II, Moses and Jesus, to name just a few.

Their ideas often shock when first articulated or stated. They may defy current, cultural and moral standards. But, in the end, their contribution will be upheld by future generations.

Before entering the hall or inner chambers of the Oracle of Delphi, the querent (defined by Wikipedia as an individual who goes to some form of psychic reader) will see on each gate the signs "Know thy self" and "Nothing to excess."

The first task of every human being is to know himself/herself. Only by knowing one's true identity can he/she attain enlightenment or "gnosis."

When we are asked the question "Who are you?" how do we answer? We may give our name, family name, parents, schools attended, degrees earned, place of birth, even one's Social Security System or Government Service Insurance System number.

But do these define us or tell others who we are? No, they only give out information outside of us. For we are not our names, our parents, our school, or SSS number. These are all outside of us and reveal nothing about who we really are.

So the ancient Greeks were correct in insisting that the initiate first answered that question before he/she could be allowed entry into the innermost chambers of the Oracle, where the high priestess sat in a deep trance, ready to answer any question asked her.

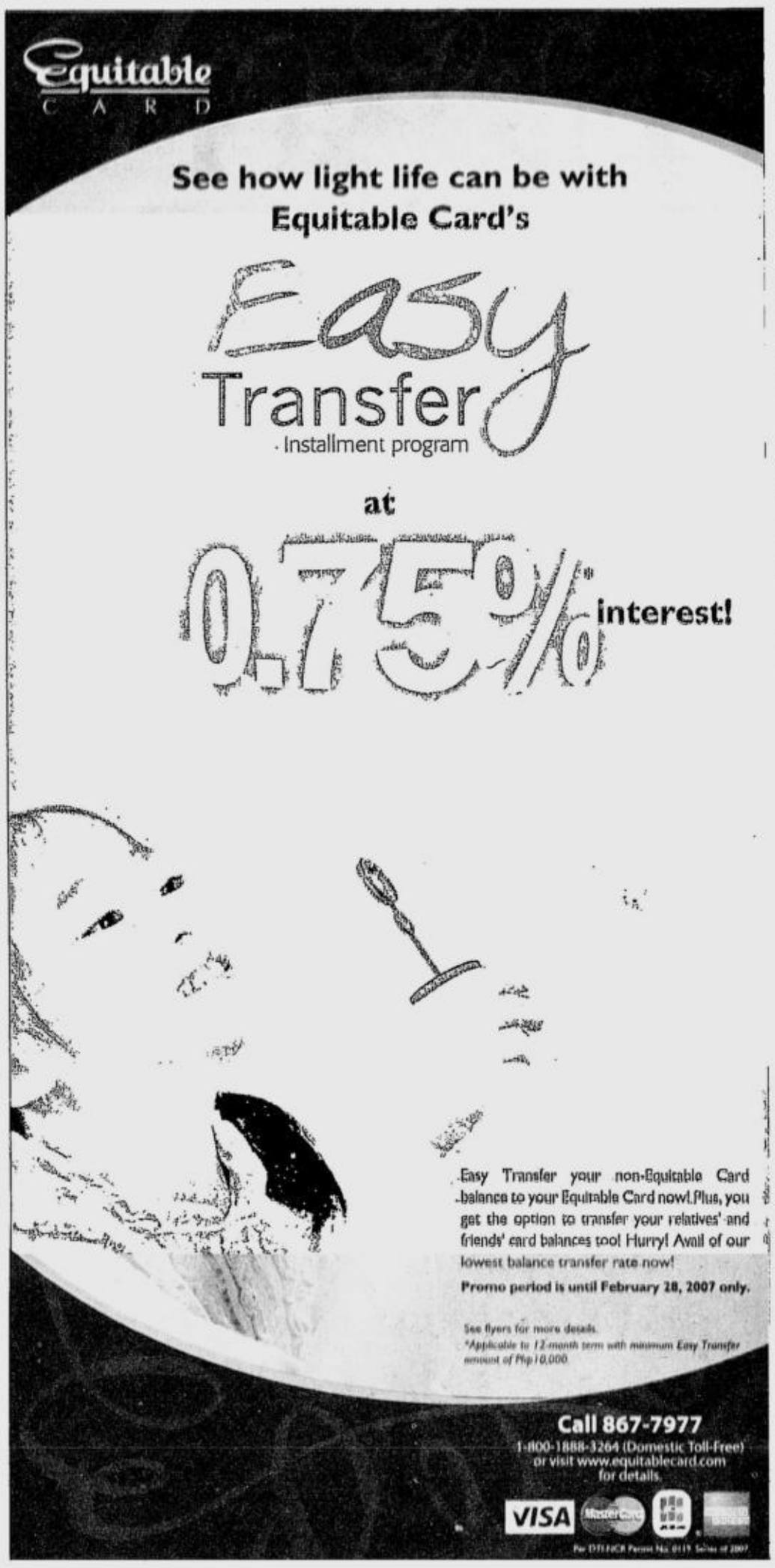
If we can but stop for a moment to reflect on that seemingly simple question, "Who are you?" we will begin to notice that there is more to us than what we have enumerated about ourselves. Perhaps there is some truth to the theory that we are of extraterrestrial origin. And, therefore, all our answers, no matter how extensive or how long, are all wrong!

We can truly say we come from outer space or, if you are more religiously inclined, we may say from heaven. What the heck are we doing in this calamity-prone planet? Some say, "This dying planet."

Well, to be honest, humankind has almost failed in its task of nourishing this planet. Instead, humans have helped bring about our planet's imminent death by their wanton destruction of the environment, the ozone layer and natural resources. We have lost touch with our mission of preserving this planet for future extraterrestrial generations.

We don't yet have the capability of interplanetary travel. We are doomed to stay here, so let us stop destroying it. We have nowhere else to go—at least for the time being, until we again learn interstellar travel and habitation.

Note: For inquiries on books, paranormal services and seminars on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Intuition Development, and Soulmates, Karma & Reincarnation conducted by this writer, please call 8107245, 8926806, or fax 8159890. E-mail innerawareness_2005@yahoo.com.ph.



Let research help you slim down...

From page C1

Sensible diet

You can lose weight without feeling hungry. Participants in a University of Pennsylvania study were able to eat 800 fewer calories per day almost effortlessly by using two strategies. First, they trimmed portions slightly by eating 25 percent less of their normal portions. Second, they substituted high-calorie foods with lower-calorie versions like baked potato instead of French fries.

Do the same by eating steamed instead of fried rice, drinking nonfat instead of full cream milk, or eating broth-based instead of cream-based soup.

Eggs

Eating an egg for breakfast can help you consume 22 percent fewer calories and 15 percent less fat during your other meals compared to having a bagel. The protein and other substances in eggs probably help suppress appetite. Researchers say do this only if you have normal cholesterol levels.

More chews

A University of Rhode Island study confirmed findings of an earlier Japanese study. Eating slowly helps you lose weight. Female study participants who took their time chewing and paused between bites consumed 80 fewer calories per meal compared to those who ate fast.

Deep belly fat

Visceral fat or fat stored deep inside the abdominal cavity of internal organs is highly associated with heart disease and diabetes.

One study claimed that exercise plus dieting seemed to be more effective than dieting alone in reducing deep belly fat. Researchers found that women who dieted and walked three times a week (slow to moderate pace) reduced the size of their abdominal fat cells by 19 percent while women who only dieted did not experience any change.

However, another study found that even if people do only one—diet or exercise—they can still lose deep abdominal fat. So the jury is still out on whether exercise, dieting, or a combination of the two is the best way to reduce what has been called "the most dangerous type of body fat."

One thing seems clear—a sedentary life increases visceral fat. Duke University researchers were surprised at how "aggressively" a couch-potato lifestyle increased deep belly fat—an average of 8.6 percent in eight months. For unknown reasons, it was worse for women (11.6 percent) than for men (5.7 percent).

As women age, they tend to get fatter in the abdominal region than the lower body. They also become more prone to heart attack. Pumping iron may help prevent middle-age spread and reduce the risk of heart problems.

A University of Minnesota study found that overweight and obese women aged 24-44 who were not dieting but were lifting weights twice a week for one hour significantly reduced intra-abdominal fat compared to those who did not lift weights.

Spot reduction

A Louisiana State University study confirmed findings of past studies. Spot reduction doesn't work.

You cannot target a part of your body where you will lose fat by doing a specific exercise program or diet. If you tend to store fat in your thighs, you may lose weight, reduce your body fat percentage, and become fitter but your thighs may still be bigger than you want them to be.

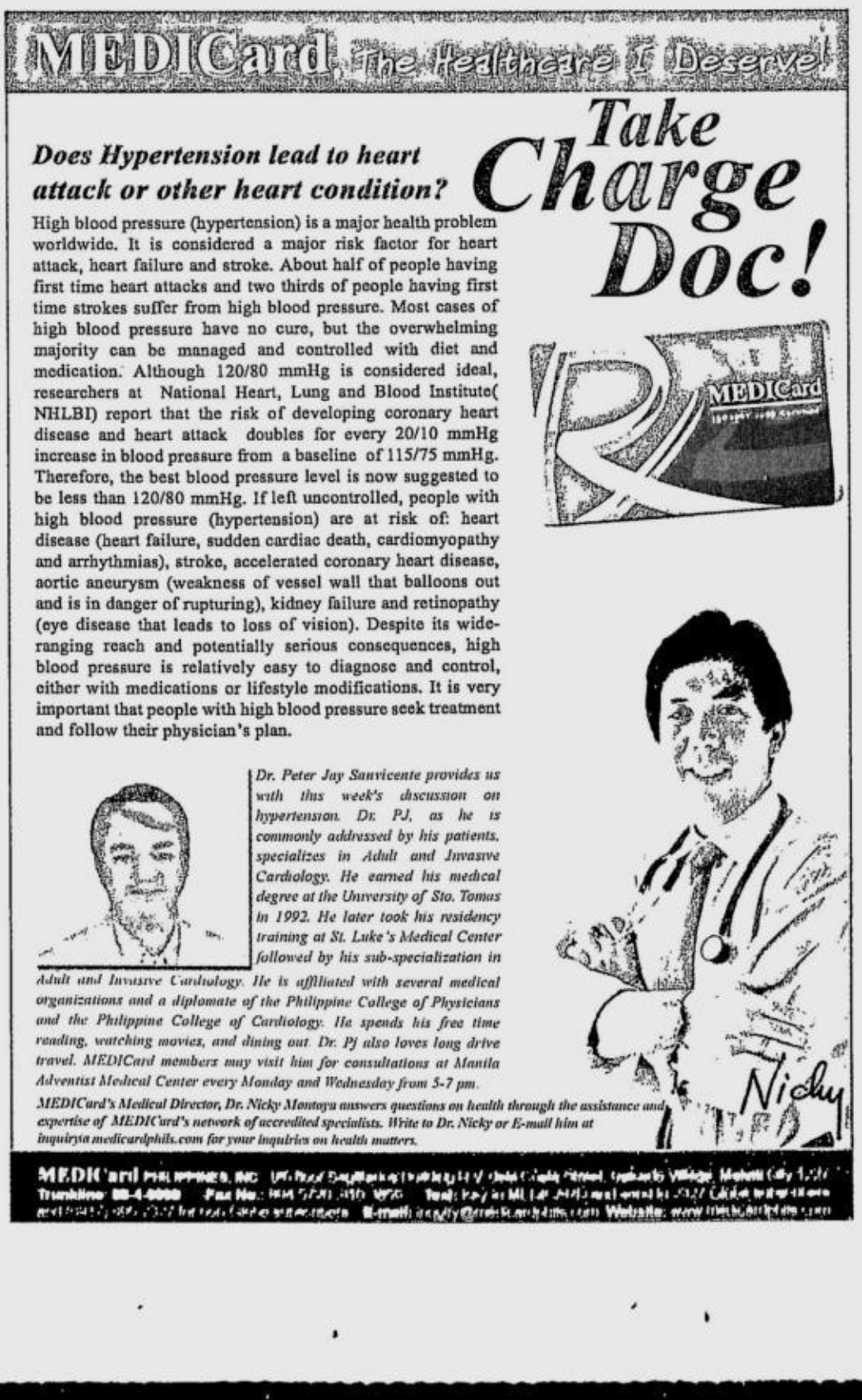
Diet and exercise

The same study found that diet alone and a combination of diet/exercise were equally effective in losing pounds. It is worth noting though that the study was only six months long.

A 1997 study had the same initial results but when participants were followed up a year later, the diet plus exercise group lost more weight than the diet only group.

Note: Yoga Manila will host a three-weekend seminar series on Ayurveda Healing with yoga teacher Ryan Redman Feb. 9-25. Call 0917-522YOGA (9642) or visit www.yogamanila.com.

Visit www.tinajuanfitness.info



ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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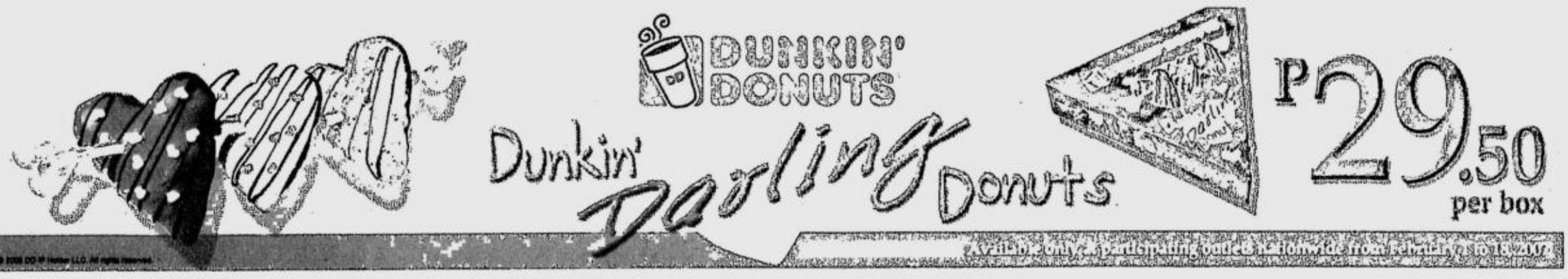


TV host's hubby in dangerous liaison

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

THIS ACTRESS/TV HOST HAS BEEN through it all in the name of love. And just when she thought she has found Mr. Right, it seems fate is playing tricks on her again.

Her beloved is said to be having a dangerous liaison with a pretty facialist. No wonder he frequents the skin care center while his wife is busy working. "Private cleaning sessions"—or are they up to something dirty? Does her services include clearing his conscience?

Carlo's crush

Carlo Aquino has a big crush on **Bianca King**. Just like his ex, **Angelica Panganiban**, Bianca was on the centerfold of a men's mag. He craves curves! He's dying to meet Bianca. But they work for rival networks. Will he be the king of her heart?

Tardy Sandy

Sandara Park arrived hours late for the contract signing of a TV project, making senior stars **Eddie Garcia**, **Ronaldo Valdez** and **Dexter Doria** wait. Though irked, Tito Eddie and company kept cool. She'd better not be tardy during tapings, lest everything in her career follows suit—then it will be too late.

Devoted Diet

Diether Ocampo says his relationship with **Kristine Hermosa** has entered a new phase. "We'd rather not label it—we're letting each other grow."

He's not bothered by persistent rumors linking Kristine to **Oyo Boy Sotto**, saying, "I believe what she says that they are just close."

Love must be deaf, too, and not just blind sometimes.

Mega Valentine

On Feb. 10, 8 p.m. at the Big Dome, **Sharon Cuneta** gives in to fans' clamor by mounting the sequel of her awesome V-day concert last year ("My Mega Valentine 2"). Her guests: **Pops Fernandez** and the Apo Hiking Society.

Songs from Sharon's triple platinum "Isn't It Romantic?" album (Sony BMG) will be part of the repertoire.

And how's Shawie's heart now? As a mom, she'd rather let **KC**'s love life blossom quietly, saying, "Some things are better left private". As the Megastar, she is not too keen about **Sarah Geronimo**, or any young star for that matter, doing a remake of "Dear Heart."

"If the stars don't look like Gabby and me, they will just pale in comparison," she says. "That movie is like my baby. I plan to buy the master negative."

Sha has every reason to be protective of her "babies." But when it comes to her music, it's all for the taking at her concert. Call 911-5555.

B-day concert

Catch **Lovi**, RX 93.1's Best New OPM Artist of the Year and "SOP's" Best Breakthrough Artsist (Solo), in her birthday concert, "It's Gonna Be Love," Feb. 11 at Teatrino Greenhills. It's directed by **Ogie Alcasid**. She'll live up to her name by showing that love is in every note she sings as she turns 18. Call 891-9999 or 721-0635.

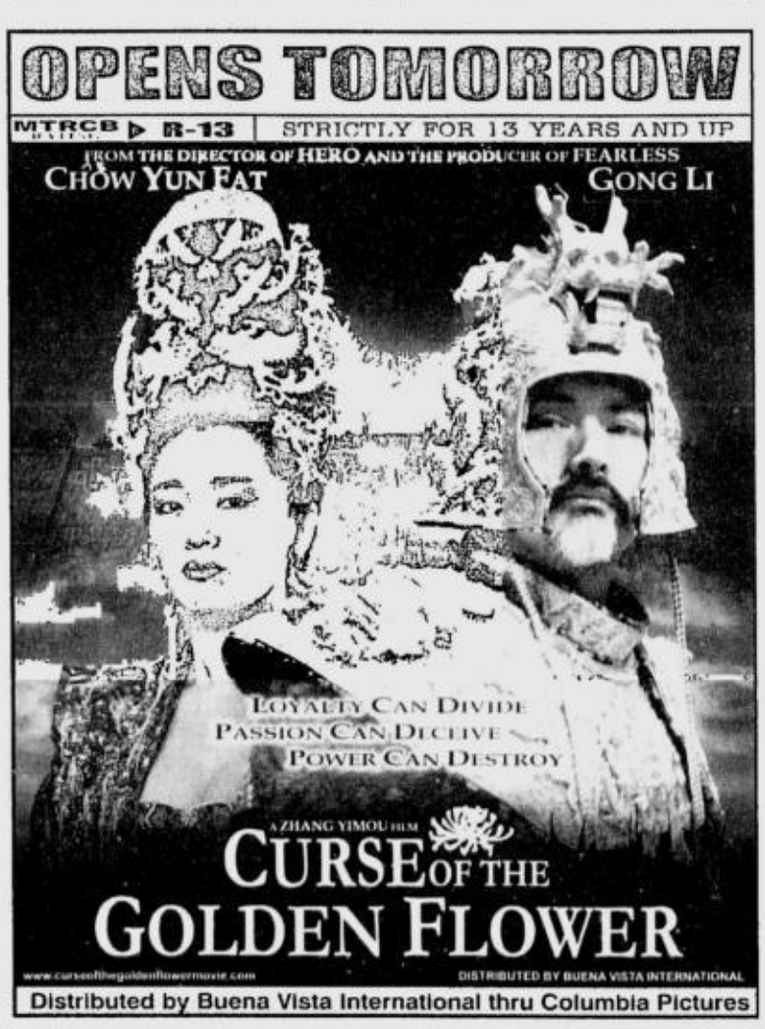
Personal

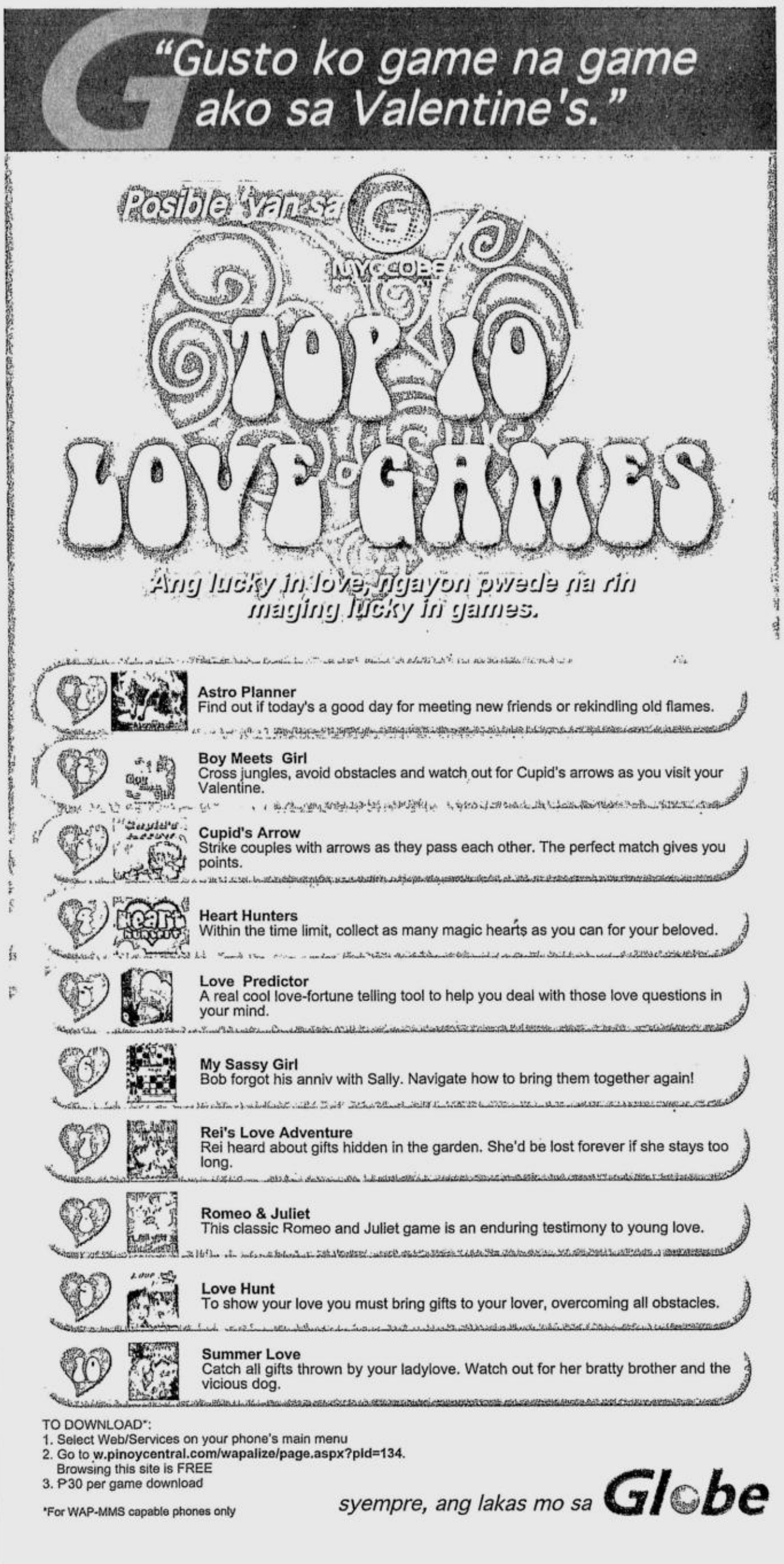
My heart goes out to my dear friends **Leah Salterio** and **Peachy Guioguio**, who were unceremoniously sacked (as PR director and PR manager) by ABS-CBN's executive **Maloli Espinosa** on her last day in office. Leah and Peachy were given two hours to clear out. What happened to Maloli's "Kapamilya" spirit? She gives PR a bad name.

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

KRISTINE Hermosa and Diether Ocampo

SHARON CUNETA





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1 DEJA VU • THX
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

2 APOCALYPTO
1:15 4:10 7:05 10:00

3 indieSine's Featured FILM: ICU BED # 7
1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30

4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
1:00 3:15 5:30 7:45 10:00

5 CHARLOTTE's WEB
12:20 2:45 5:10 7:35 10:00

6 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 BABEL
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

8 LITTLE CHILDREN
1:30 4:20 7:10 10:00

9 SAW 3
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

10 AGENT X44
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

ERMITA 536-7809 to 12

1 APOCALYPTO
12:35 3:40 6:45 10:00

2 BABEL 12:00 2:30
SAW 3 5:10 7:25 9:50

3 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

4 LITTLE CHILDREN
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

5 AGENT X44
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:25 10:00

7 CHARLOTTE's WEB
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

METRO EAST 682-9193, 682-8189

1 ROB-B-HOOD
1:10 3:40 6:20 9:00

2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
1:15 3:50 6:25 9:00

3 APOCALYPTO
11:55 2:25 5:55 9:00

4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:05

5 SAW 3
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

6 LITTLE CHILDREN
1:20 4:00 6:40 6:40 9:10

7 CHARLOTTE's WEB
11:00 1:25 3:50 6:25 9:00

8 AGENT X44
12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

NOVALICHES 436-3721 / 436-3728-30

1 APOCALYPTO
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

PIONEER 687-5378

1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
1:30 3:55 6:20 8:40

2 APOCALYPTO
2:40 5:35 8:30

3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
1:15 3:45 6:15 8:40

4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
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2 APOCALYPTO
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4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

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2 AGENT X44
3 DECK THE HALLS
4 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

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3 AGENT X44
4 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX
5 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
6 APOCALYPTO

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2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
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5 AGENT X44
6 FEAST

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11:45AM 1:00PM
Admission Fee- P200
1 DEJA VU
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 BABEL
5 AGENT X44
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO/ AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
PREMIERE CINEMA
RESERVED
CENTERSTAGE
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CINEMA 1
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
CINEMA 2
CHARLOTTE'S WEB
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1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 DEJA VU
3 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO/ AN INCONVENIENT TRUTH
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 BABEL
6 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
7 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
8 BLOOD DIAMOND
9 AGENT X44
10 ROB-B-HOOD
11 ERAGON
12 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 BABEL
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
5 DEJA VU
5 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
7 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
8 AGENT X44
9 RESERVED
10 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
11 ROB-B-HOOD
12 ERAGON

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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9 AGENT X44
10 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
11 BLOOD DIAMOND
12 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
2 AGENT X44
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
5 ANNAPOLIS
6 ROB-B-HOOD
7 ERAGON
8 GRIDIRON GANG
9 BLOOD DIAMOND
10 DEJA VU

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2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
5 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
6 AGENT X44

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
3 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
5 BABEL
6 ERAGON
7 DEJA VU
8 AGENT X44
9 ROB-B-HOOD

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1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
3 AGENT X44
4 ERAGON

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1 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
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5 ARTHUR AND THE INVISIBLES
6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
8 BABEL
9 ERAGON
10 ROB-B-HOOD
11 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO
12 AGENT X44

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3 AGENT X44
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2 TENACIOUS D
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8 DEJA VU

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3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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3 AGENT X44
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3 AGENT X44
4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
5 DECK THE HALLS
6 KASAL, KASALI, KASALO

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2 RESERVED
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4 AGENT X44
5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
6 BLOOD DIAMOND
7 RESERVED
8 A GOOD YEAR

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2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
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2 AGENT X44
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2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 AGENT X44
4 SHAOLIN VS EVIL DEAD
5 SCHOOL FOR SCOUNDRELS
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3 AGENT X44
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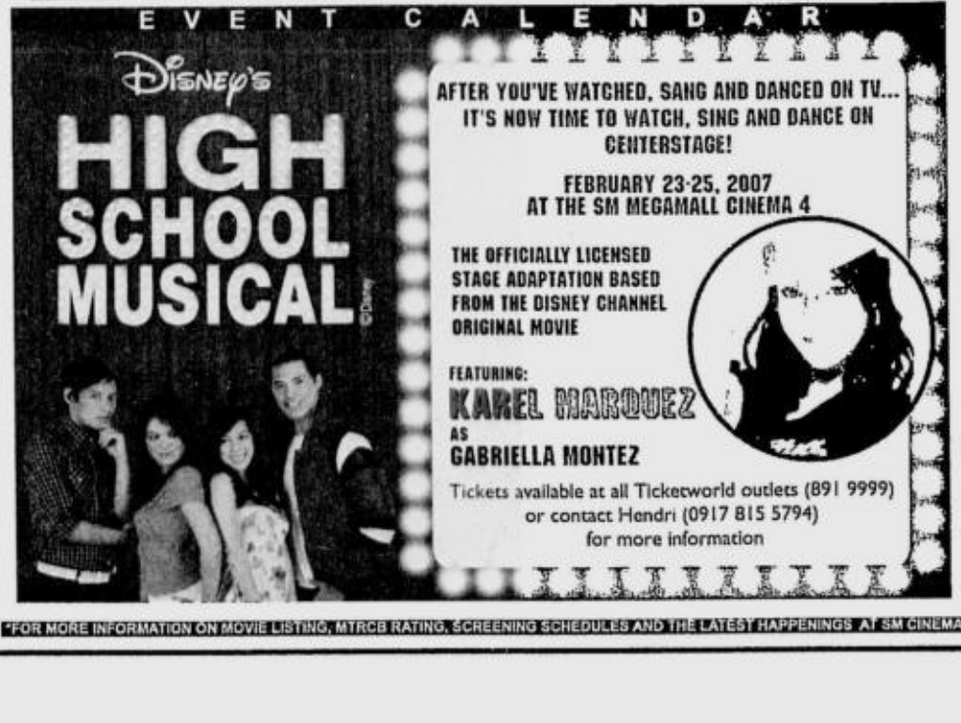
SHOWTIME EVENT CALENDAR



*FOR MORE INFORMATION ON MOVIE LISTING, MTRCB RATING, SCREENING SCHEDULES AND THE LATEST HAPPENINGS AT SM CINEMA

D2

RUSHES

PATRICK DEMPSEY
REUTERS

Twin McDreamys

LOS ANGELES—THE wife of "Grey's Anatomy" star Patrick Dempsey has given birth to twin boys.

Darby Galen and Sullivan Patrick Dempsey were born Thursday in Los Angeles, the actor's representative told People magazine. Dempsey, and his wife, Jillian, also have a 5-year-old daughter, Talula.

Dempsey, 41, plays Dr. Derek Shepherd, known as "Dr. McDreamy" to his female colleagues on the hit ABC show. *AP*

Down to earth

MUMBAI, India—Renowned Indian director Mira Nair said Hollywood actor Johnny Depp is a humble soul with none of the trappings of stardom, a report said Friday.

Depp is to play the lead in Nair's new movie "Shantaram" about an Australian fugitive on the run who arrives in Mumbai, sets up a free clinic in a shanty and works for the city's crime bosses.

"He's generally inquisitive about the world," Nair told The Mumbai Mirror newspaper. "He considers 'Shantaram' his bible." *AP*

PRINCE REUTERS

Prince at Super Bowl

MIAMI—Prince let his music do the talking on Thursday when he faced the media at a news conference covering Sunday's Super Bowl half-time show.

The singer, clad in a tunic-style orange jump suit, eschewed questions about his Super set, instead launching into a pulsating three-song performance to preview what should be a high-energy break from the NFL championship game.

The pre-game entertainment will be provided by local pop singer Gloria Estefan and the acrobatic troupe Cirque du Soleil, while Billy Joel will sing the National Anthem .

"I think people have always recognized that (the Super Bowl) is a form of entertainment," said Joel, a member of the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame. "It is the biggest television day of the year." *Reuters*

EASTWOOD CINEMAS

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

To receive Eastwood City Events, Promos and Cinema schedule just text eastwood and send to 2948 for Globe, Smart & Sun Cellular subscribers

For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Cinema	Movie	Schedule	Rating
1	CHARLOTTE'S WEB	1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:55, 11:10	G
2	APOCALYPTO	2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10	R-18
3	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	1:05, 3:35, 6:05, 8:35, 11:00	G
4	BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	1:40, 4:00, 6:20, 8:40, 11:00	PG-13

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 APOCALYPTO
MTRCB R-18
1.00, 4.00, 7.00, 10.00

2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
MTRCB GP
2.30, 5.00, 7:30, 10:00

3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
MTRCB GP
2.30, 5.00, 7:30, 10:00

4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
MTRCB PG-13
12.40, 3.00, 5.20, 7:40, 10:00

PREMIERE THEATRE — TEMPORARILY CLOSED

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

Catch the Cineplex Special

A Blockbuster Gift for all Season
The Shang Cineplex Gift Certificates
Treat your family and friends to a thrilling movie experience only at the shang.
Cinema Treats- for Cinemas 1, 2, 3, and 4
Premiere Rewards- for the Premiere Theatre

6th floor, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
EDSA corner Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City
Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227 for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City — Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE PG13 1:45,3:55,6:05,8:15	CHARLOTTE'S WEB G 1:10,3:30,5:50,8:10	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM G 12:30,3:00,5:30,8:00
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM G 1:00,3:30,6:00,8:30	BABEL PG13 1:40,4;30,7:20,10:10	APOCALYPTO R18 1:55,4:40,7:35,10:30

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE: FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-1440/41
MATINNEE 110.00 FREE SEATING SCREENING BEFORE 5:00P.M. – MONDAY-FRIDAY

GREENHILLS CINEMAS

GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 BABEL 10:50, 1:45, 4:40, 7:35, 10:30 PG-13
CINEMA 2 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE 11:50, 2:10, 4:25, 6:40, 9:00 PG-13
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinetertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 APOCALYPTO 10:50, 1:40, 4:30, 7:20, 10:10 R-18
CINEMA 4 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 11:40, 2:20, 5:00, 7:40, 10:20 GP
CINEMA 5 CHARLOTTE'S WEB 10:45, 1:10, 3:30, 5:50,8:10,10:30 GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

Date	Event	Time
Feb 7 & 8, 2007	Agot Isidro "Back to Basics"	8:30 PM
Feb 13 & 14, 2007	Ogie Alcasid	8:00 PM
Feb 16 & 17, 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM
MARCH 06, 2007	EDNA LEDESMA	6:00 PM

TEATRINO — PROMENADE GREENHILLS

Date	Event	Time
EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
Feb. 06 & 20, 2007	DYORDS KO PO	6:30 PM
February 11, 2007	LOVI POE "A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION"	9:00 PM
Feb 13 & 14, 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

OPENS TOMORROW

MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult

music and lyrics

80's Memorabilia Display

Calling all 80's yuppies!!!
To join, submit any 80's memorabilia (albums, songs and lyrics, records, posters and other music related items) on a half illustration board. Attach description of the entry with your name and age at the lower front of the entry and your complete personal information at the upper right back corner of the entry of the board.

Deadline of submission is on *February 09, 2007.* Submit all entries to the Marketing Department at L4 Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Cinema 5. Winners will get advance screening movie invites and music and lyrics gift packs.

For inquiries, please call the Marketing Department, at 395-2188 locs. 230 / 240

REGULAR Showing: February 14
MTRCB Rating: PG13

IN THEATERS TOMORROW

MTRCB RATING PG-13

Cameron Diaz · Kate Winslet · Jude Law · Jack Black

the Holiday
a film by Nancy Meyers

UNIVERSAL PICTURES AND COLUMBIA PICTURES PRESENT A WAVERLY FILMS PRODUCTION "THE HOLIDAY" ELI WALLACH EDWARD BURNS RUFUS SEWELL MUSIC BY HANS ZIMMER MARLENE STEWART JOE HUTSHING A.C.E. JON HUTMAN DEAN CUNDEY ASC SUZANNE FARWELL BRUCE A. BLOCK NANCY MEYERS

sony.com/TheHoliday
Release through Solar Entertainment Corporation

ARANETA CENTER

Gateway · Alimall · Farmers Plaza

THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY — Gateway CINEPLEX*10 — DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

APOCALYPTO 12:40 / 3:40 / 6:00 / 9:50	NEVERWAS 12:40 / 3:00 / 5:20 / 7:40 / 10:00	HOLLYWOODLAND 1:25 / 4:15 / 7:05 / 9:55	Gold Platinum Cinema
BABEL 12:20 / 3:20 / 6:20 / 9:20	CHARLOTTE'S WEB 12:00 / 2:20 / 4:40 / 7:00 / 9:20	BLOOD & CHOCOLATE 12:50 / 3:05 / 5:20 / 7:35 / 9:50	
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 11:50 / 2:20 / 4:50 / 7:20 / 9:50	AGENT X-44 1:00 / 3:10 / 5:20 / 7:30 / 9:40	SAW 3 1:10 / 3:20 / 5:30 / 7:40 / 9:50	APOCALYPTO 12:00 / 3:00 / 6:00 / 9:00

ALIMALL 5

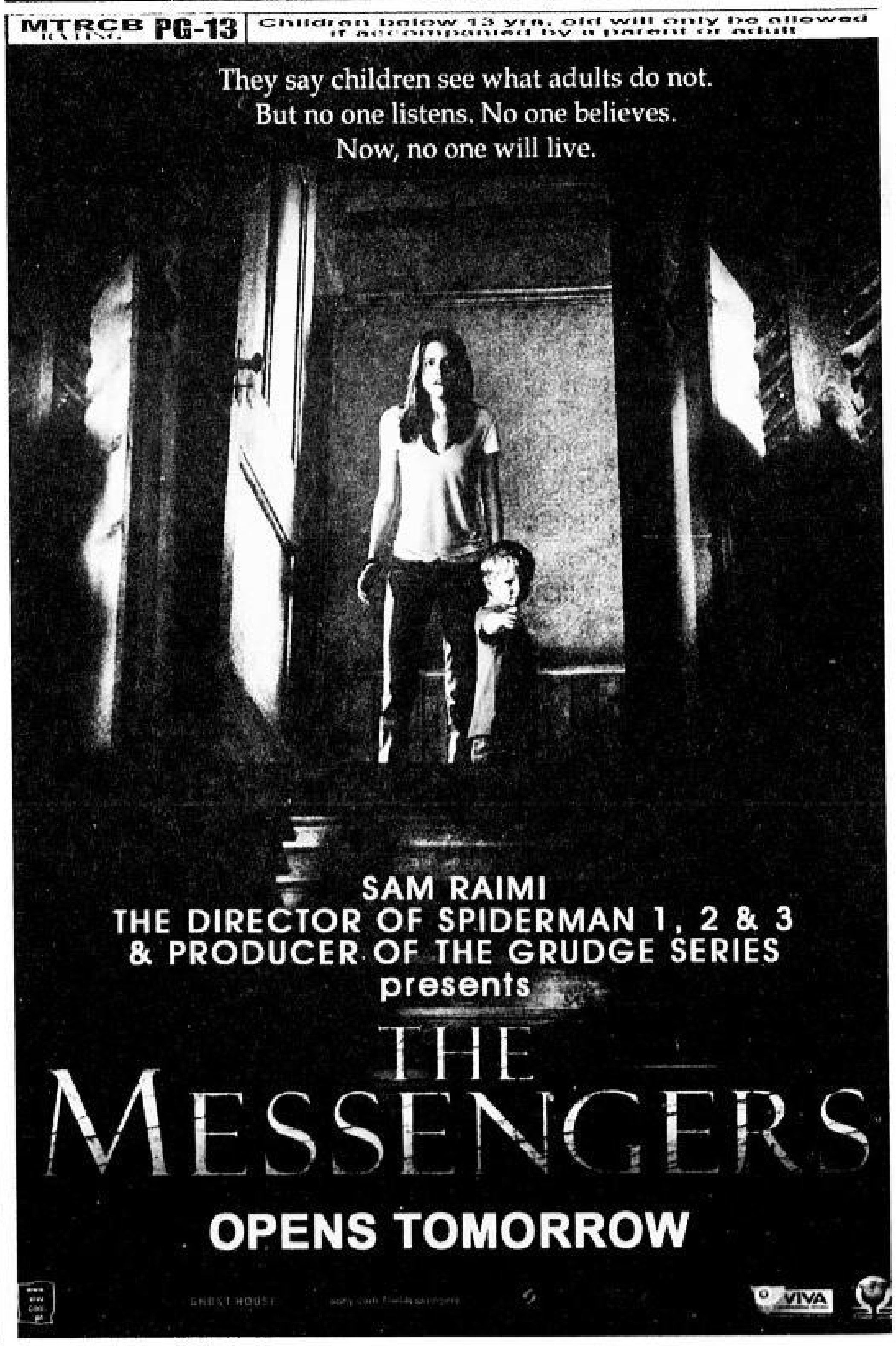
BLOOD & CHOCOLATE 12.05 R3 / 1:40 / 3:55 / 6.10 / 8.25	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 12:20 / 2.30 / 5:30 / 8:00	APOCALYPTO 12:10 R5 / 1:50 / 4.50 / 7:50
AGENT X-44 11:55 / 2:05 / 4:15 / 6:25 / 8:35	LITTLE CHILDREN 12.30 / 3:00 / 5.30 / 8:00	DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

SHARON CUNETA - MY MEGA VALENTINE 2 — February 10, Saturday 8 pm
CLIFF RICHARD " Here and Now Tour 2007" — February 13, Tuesday 8 pm

MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult



MMTA METRO MANILA THEATERS ASSOCIATION

MOVIE GUIDE

NOW SHOWING

SHANG CINEPLEX
6th floor Shangri-La Plaza EDSA corner Shaw Boulevard Mandaluyong City Telephone 633 2227 - 633784 loc 171
1 APOCALYPTO
2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
PREMIERE
TEMPORARILY CLOSED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 APOCALYPTO
3 AGENT X 44
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

Starmall EDSA-SHAW
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7266150
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
5 RESRVED

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504286, 8433894
1 AGENT X 44
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 APOCALYPTO

THEATRES
1 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
1 AGENT X 44
2 BLOOD DIAMOND
3 RESRVED
4 RESRVED

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 BABEL
2 KASAL KASALI KASALO
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 APOCALYPTO
5 BLOD CHOCOLATE
6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
8 SAW - 3
9 ROB-B-HOOD
10 AGENT X 44

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sta. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 (DOLBY) BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 (DOLBY) APOCALYPTO
3 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 APOCALYPTO
3 AGENT X 44
4 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
5 LITTLE CHILDREN

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 SAW - 3
2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 SUPER NOYPI
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 AGENT X 44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 BLOOD CHOCOLATE

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)-(4449346)
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 BLOOD DIAMOND

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 APOCALYPTO
3 GRIFFEN & PHOENIX
4 SHAOLIN VS' EVIL DEAD

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 AGENT X 44
2 ROB-B-HOOD

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72
1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
2 APOCALYPTO
3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 AGENT X 44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 MANO PO - 5
2 AGENT X 44
3 ERAGON

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
2 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 AGENT X 44
2 MATAKOT KA SA KARMA

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748
1 ERAGON
2 KAMASUTRA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 TENACIOUS-D
2 BOGBOG SARADO
3 PARAISO SA GUBAT
4 FRAGILE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 BOA
2 BEDROOM SECRET
3 AGENT X 44
4 BLOOD DIAMOND
5 KARIBAL

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 LITTLE CHILDREN
2 AGENT X 44
3 KARELASYON
4 FRAGILE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
2 KAMASUTRA

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

ROUNDUP

'Twilight Dancers' preem

DIRECTOR MEL CHIONGLO'S CONTROVERsial film, "Twilight Dancers," will hold its premiere at the UP Film Institute on Feb. 8 at 7 p.m.

The full international version that was screened in Toronto, Chicago and Palm Springs, will be shown strictly for adults. It stars Cherry Pie Picache, Allen Dizon, Lauren Novero and Tyron Perez.

H'wood director search

The search is on for the next great Hollywood director.

"On the Lot," a brainchild of reality TV mastermind Mark Burnett and film legend Steven Spielberg, pits 16 aspiring filmmakers against each other, with their fates determined by a weekly vote.

Interested filmmakers may submit a film before Feb. 16 for a chance to earn a $1 million film development deal at DreamWorks. For submission details, log on to http://www.startv.com/onthelot.

Each week, 16 hopefuls will produce short films from a chosen genre. They will have access to the best resources the industry has to offer—professional writers, cast and crew, even Hollywood celebrities.

Their works will debut in front of a live audience.

All films must be English-subtitled if they are in a foreign language.

The reality search starts airing on Star Movies this May.

RP film wins in CineMart

Director Raya Martin's "Independencia," produced by Arleen Cuevas, bagged the 2007 Prince Claus Fund Grant of 15,000 euros (about $19,535) in this year's CineMart Awards in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

In a joint statement on Thursday, the Prince Claus Fund jury said they chose "what was clearly one of the most original ideas among the 2007 CineMart selection."

"This powerful and original project embodies a daring cinematographic voice with clear political undertone, where the unfolding narrative seems to emerge from images and sound rather than the established convention of storytelling," the statement said of Martin's film.

The film tells of a mother and son at the turn of the 20th century, who run off to the mountains following the onset of American rule in the Philippines.

OPENS TOMORROW
FROM BESTSELLING AUTHOR THOMAS HARRIS COMES THE FINAL INSTALLMENT IN THE "SILENCE OF THE LAMBS" SAGA
the silence of the lambs · RED DRAGON · HANNIBAL
YOU KNOW HIS METHOD...
YOU KNOW HIS APPETITE...
NOW, KNOW HIS BEGINNING
GASPARD ULLIEL · GONG LI
HANNIBAL RISING

MTRCB RATING PG-13 | Children below 13 yrs. old will only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult
now showing
WEREWOLVES vs HUMANS... WHO WILL SURVIVE?
FROM THE PRODUCER OF "UNDERWORLD"
BLOOD & CHOCOLATE

glorietta · GREENBELT · ALABANG TOWN CENTER · AYALA CENTER CEBU · MARKET! MARKET! · Ayala Malls

AT THE CINEMAS
Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification, please call 729 7777

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 APOCALYPTO	2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	3 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	4 AGENT X44
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	2 BABEL	3 THX APOCALYPTO GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 HOLLYWOODLAND	5 STRANGER THAN FICTION	6 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	7 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 APOCALYPTO		2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX APOCALYPTO GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 HOLLYWOODLAND GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BABEL GUARANTEED SEATS	5 CHARLOTTE'S WEB GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX APOCALYPTO GUARANTEED SEATS		2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	
	3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	4 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	5 BABEL	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 APOCALYPTO	2 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	3 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 APOCALYPTO		2 BLOOD & CHOCOLATE	
	3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB	4 AGENT X44	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm; Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm; Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm; Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324; Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA
Photoworld Manila
February 1 to 6, 2007

ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Celebrate the sweet life at the Town this Valentine's w/ MYMP Live!
February 10, 2007

AYALA CENTER CEBU
Philippine Arts Festival
February 10, 2007

MARKET! MARKET!
Chinese New Year Celebration with Porky Pig
February 10, 2007

GREENBELT
Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peak presents: Collection of Ana Rocha
February 7 to 18, 2007

Greenbelt Onstage
Repertory Philippines presents SONG & DANCE
at REP's Globe Theater - February 9 to March 4, 2007
For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM
CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows)
February 15 to March 27, 2007
For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Ayala Malls Cinemas Valentine Dream Date

Get a chance to win: Ayala CINEMAS

First Prize:
- Movie and Dinner Date for two at Fish & Co.
- Total Rejuvenating Facial for two at Dermclinic
- Make-over at Bench Fix Salon for Two

Second Prize: Dinner Date for Two at Fish & Co. Gift Pack from Dermclinic

Third Prize: Movie Date for Two Gift Certificate from Fish & Co.

CONSOLATION PRIZES:
FOR GREENBELT 1, GREENBELT 3, GLORIETTA 1, AND GLORIETTA 4
• 50 Holy Kettle Korn Popcorn • 50 Timezone Game Cards • 1 Gift Certificate from Ice Vodka Bar • 2 Gift packs from Dermclinic • 2 Gift Certificates from Fish & Co. • 5 Bench Fix Salon Gift Certificates

Promo Period: February 1-11, 2007
Deadline for submission of entries: February 11, 2007
Raffle Draw: February 12, 2007, 4:30pm with a DTI Representative
Per DTI Permit A1-070 Series of 2007

Get one raffle coupon for every two (02) movie tickets purchased at any Greenbelt or Glorietta Cinemas. Fill it up and drop at drop boxes located at the cinema lobby ticket booth.

*See promo banners for more details

dermclinic · HOLY KETTLE KORN · Bench FOX salon · glorietta · GREENBELT

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For inquiries, please call
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Alabang Town Center: 842-2782/772-1860
Ayala Center Cebu: (032) 232-0380
Market! Market!: 886 -7519

BPI
www.ayalamalls.com.ph

WORLD / A22

Ex-New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani joins White House race

METRO/ A19

NBI to subpoena another Leviste employee

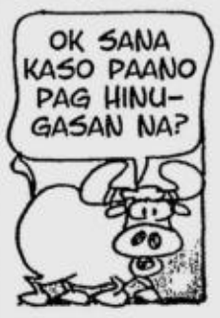
NEWS / A2

Press freedom in Asia repressed in '06; RP, Afghanistan deadliest, US media group says

NEWS / A2

SC dismisses Nicole petition questioning VFA provision on US custody

Anti-fat underwear now on sale but jury still out



PARIS—UNDERWEAR that helps women slim down and men feel cool and fresh—purveyors of cosmeto-textiles were out in force at Paris' annual lingerie trade fair on Sunday.

ANTI-FAT/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, February 7, 2007 ★★ 5 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 61 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Orbiting junk in space reaches critical mass

FOR DECADES, SPACE EXPERTS HAVE WORried that a speeding bit of orbital debris might one day smash a large spacecraft into hundreds of pieces and start a chain reaction, a slow cascade of collisions that would expand for centuries, spreading chaos through the heavens.

In the last decade or so, as scientists came to agree that the number of objects in orbit had surpassed a critical mass—or, in their terms,

ORBITING/ A15

Villar snubs GMA ticket

Lacson says coalition with UNO a done deal

By Juliet Labog-Javellana and TJ Burgonio

WITH SENATORIAL ASPIrants criss-crossing party lines days before the deadline for the filing of their certificates of candidacy, Senate President Manuel Villar ruled out the possibility of his running under the administration ticket.

The reelectionist senator, who heads the chamber that has been at odds with President Macapagal-Arroyo, said he would either be with the opposition slate or with a third or middle force he was still trying to form with fellow senators eligible to run for another six-year term.

"I'm either joining a middle force or UNO," he told the INQUIRER Monday, referring to ousted President Joseph Estrada's United Opposition, which has so far announced eight candidates for the 12

VILLAR/ A10

CALL CENTER, SULU STYLE
A member of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 9 checks his cell phone for messages/missed calls in the only spot where cellular signals can penetrate Barangay Bonbon, Patikul, Sulu. *(See Across the Nation, PageA16.)*

REM ZAMORA

General finally admits he was MNLF hostage

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER DAYS OF VIGOROUS DENIALS by Malacañang, Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino yesterday publicly admitted he and his 22-member peace mission had been taken hostage by fighters of the Moro National Liberation Front.

"In the strictest sense of the word, we were hostaged because we were prevented from leaving the camp," Dolorfino told members of the Commission on Appointments (CA) during his confirmation hearings.

"We were in a situation in which we had no other choice but to stay," he said.

This was the first time that the head of the military's National Capital Region Command made the admission after he and his companions were freed Sunday from two nights of detention at an MNLF camp in Panamao on Jolo island, Sulu.

Prior to Dolorfino's statement before the CA, Malacañang and the military leadership had painstakingly denied that Dolorfino and his companions had been taken hostage by the MNLF, insisting that they were in the camp at the MNLF's "invitation" or "request."

Dolorfino made the admission during the CA hearing called to confirm his promotion to major general.

Until yesterday, Dolorfino had preferred to use his prior rank of brigadier general.

GENERAL/ A4

SC rules vs doc, hospital over patient's death

THE SUPREME COURT HAS AFFIRMED a Court of Appeals decision finding the owner of Medical City General Hospital and a member of its surgical staff liable for the death of a patient as a result of complications arising from two pieces of gauze being left in her body during an operation.

The high court found Dr. Miguel Ampil liable for "medical negligence," and said the contention of Professional Services Inc. (PSI), the hospital owner, that it could not be held liable for his error did not stand.

It likewise upheld the awarding of more than P3 million in damages to the family of Natividad Agana, who died in 1986, two years after the surgery.

SC RULES/ A15

GMA allies in House vote to suspend Cayetano

By Michael Lim Ubac

AFTER MORE THAN FIVE HOURS OF A tumultuous hearing, allies of President Macapagal-Arroyo slapped a 45-day suspension on House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano for allegedly unfairly accusing the First Family of secretly maintaining millions of dollars in a German bank.

Voting 35-3-1, the administration-dominated House committee on ethics and privileges chastised the opposition stalwart for what it deemed to be "improper conduct and unparliamentary behavior."

Cayetano, who is gunning for a Senate seat in the May elections, said the committee ruling had yet to be approved by two-thirds of the plenary before it could be carried out.

While three opposition lawmakers sided with Cayetano—Representatives Rafael Mariano, Roilo Golez and Teofisto Guingona III—a lone congressman, Agapito "Butz" Aquino, abstained from the voting.

"I don't want to have a part in this kangaroo court," said Aquino.

The vote came after Cayetano refused to present evidence although he had been given two days by the committee to do so, said administration lawmakers.

Instead of presenting evidence, Cayetano had asked to be allowed to

GMA ALLIES/ A10

Asia now one of world's fastest growing millionaires' clubs

SINGAPORE—WITH ROBUST ECOnomic growth turning Asia into one of the world's fastest-growing millionaires' clubs, Asian workers are expected to enjoy the highest pay hikes on the planet this year, a survey showed yesterday.

Private bankers have been flocking to the region, and banks such as Merrill Lynch/Capgemini bet that the wealth of Asian millionaires may hit $10.6 trillion in 2010.

"There is too much money chasing after too few managers, so companies have to throw more money at their managers to get them to stay," Lee Quane, ECA's Hong Kong-based general manager, told Reuters.

The other factors expected to benefit Asian workers aside from economic growth are talent shortage and lower inflation, according to the results of a survey by human resources firm ECA International, which compared 45 countries.

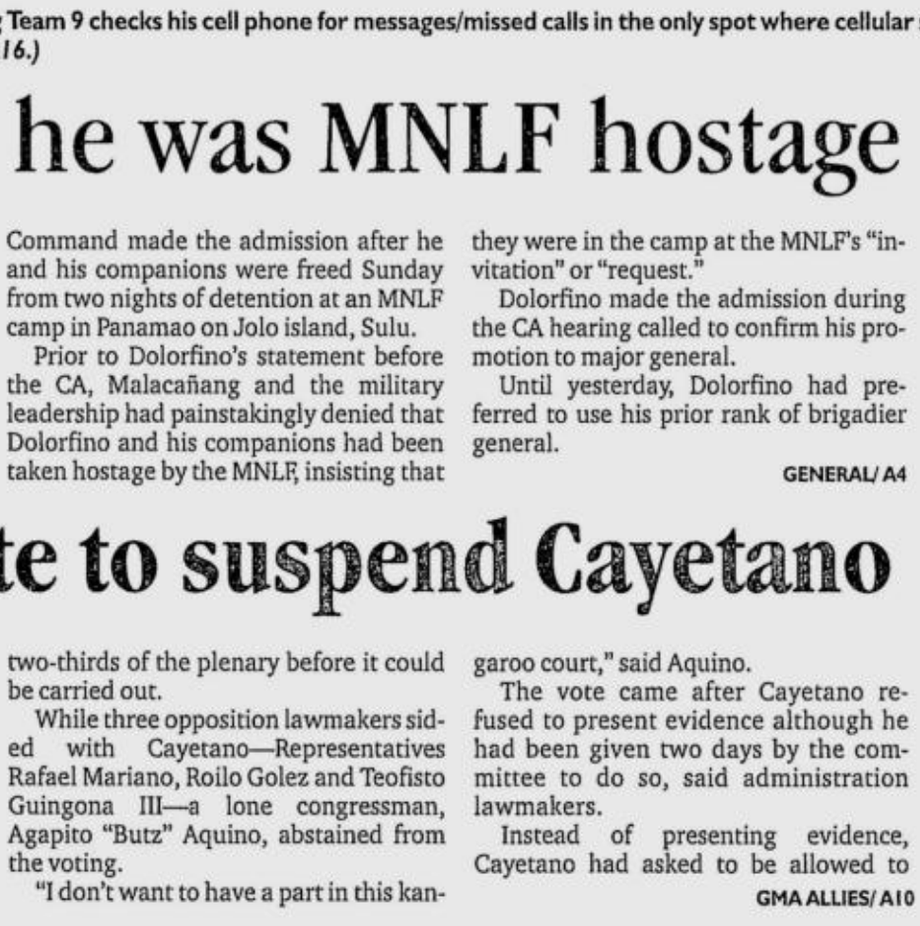
The world's top 10 countries with the highest forecasted "real" wage increases in 2007 are, in chronological order, India, Indonesia, China, the Philippines, Thailand, Slovakia, South Korea, Malaysia, Egypt and Russia.

Real wage increases, which represent workers' annual salary rises after taking inflation into account, are expected to climb an average 3.6 percent in Asia this year—a 50-percent jump from 2.4 percent in 2006.

Salaries for Asian workers may get a bigger boost because Asian economies are growing faster than the supply of talent—especially for senior managers—and because falling inflation rates are lifting purchasing power, Quane said.

The survey said workers in India were set to enjoy the sharpest jump in real wages across the globe this year at 7 per-

ASIA NOW/ A6



LYN RILLON

OLD FRIENDS, President Arroyo and PDI Chair Marixi R. Prieto, meet at the launching on Monday of "Negosyo," a book about 50 inspiring entrepreneurial stories at the residence of Joey Concepcion, presidential consultant on entrepreneurship.

Fil-Ams to invest P150M in AFP bank 'for heroes'

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LARGEST ORGANIZATION OF FILipinos based in North America will invest P150 million in Centennial Savings Bank, owned by the Armed Forces of the Philippines, in a bid to transform it into a facility for "real and living heroes."

In a statement, CSB announced that it had recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Filipino Foundation for International Brotherhood, or Kapatiran, for the organization's investment in the bank this year.

The capital buildup is in line with CSB's intention to launch new products and technologies that would transform the bank into "a major service provider to overseas Filipinos and the men and women of the Armed Forces."

FIL-AMS/ A6

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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3 6 13 31 36 42
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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Eastern sections of Luzon and Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/06/07 SOURCE PAGASA

SC junks 'Nicole' petition vs VFA

By Leila B. Salaverria

DECLARING THE MATTER MOOT, THE SUPREME Court has dismissed the petition of Subic rape victim "Nicole" seeking to invalidate the provision in the Visiting Forces Agreement that prescribes a one-year period for the completion of judicial proceedings against United States servicemen facing criminal charges in the Philippines.

"Consequently, the issue of whether the obligation of the US under the VFA to present the accused for trial continues even after the one-year period is now merely academic in this case, since the one-year period was not exceeded," said the high court in an en banc resolution released yesterday.

Four American Marines were accused of raping Nicole at the Subic Freeport in November 2005. Only one of them, Lance Cpl. Daniel Smith, was found guilty by a Makati Regional Trial Court in December 2006.

The US Marines were in the country to take part in joint maneuvers with the Philippine military.

In the petition filed in June 2006, Nicole also contested the validity of the VFA provision allowing American servicemen accused of a crime to remain under US custody until the completion of the judicial proceedings against them.

But the Supreme Court did not rule on the matter, saying the issue had been raised in another petition filed by Nicole last month and would be taken up when that petition was discussed.

"The other points raised in the petition referring to the custody of the accused, now relevant only as to Daniel Smith, are raised by petitioner in a new petition filed before this Court and would thus be more properly addressed in that case," it said.

In questioning the one-year prescription period for the completion of judicial proceedings, Nicole said this infringed on the Supreme Court's power to promulgate rules concerning procedures in all courts.

But Nicole's rape case against the US Marines was resolved by the Makati RTC at the "earliest possible time" before the one-year prescription period lapsed, the high tribunal said.

The case was raffled off in the Olongapo City RTC on Dec. 27, 2005, but after a series of judges inhibited themselves from the case, it was transferred to the Makati RTC which promulgated the guilty verdict on Smith on Dec. 4, 2006.

Smith's custody while the case is under appeal has been a bone of contention after he was initially held at the Makati City jail following his conviction, but was later spirited out and returned to the US Embassy compound on Roxas Boulevard in Manila where all four Marines had been detained while the trial was going on.

27th bet claims it's his destiny to do good

By Jerome Aning

A MAN CLAIMING TO BE DESTINED to do good things for the country became the 27th person to file his senatorial candidacy papers at the Commission on Elections yesterday.

"If I am elected, I will change the name of the country to 'The Greatest Land' and you [the Filipinos] will be called 'The Greatest People' as a symbol of your freedom," said Victor "Itinakda" Santos.

He said that slavery remained because the country still carried the name of Spain's King Philip II. Renaming the Philippines would signify complete freedom that the country needs to prosper, he said.

Santos said his platform was "ultimate democracy," for which there is no model hence he would serve as that model when he wins a Senate seat.

Detained Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes, the 26th filer, was mobbed like a movie star when he was released from prison yesterday so he could file his candidacy papers.

COUP SUSPECT TO CANDIDATE. Navy officer Antonio Trillanes, detained on coup charges, shows certificate of candidacy after filing his papers at the Comelec. AP

Trillanes, 35, who is awaiting trial for the failed July 2003 coup, said he would rely on his supporters and on mass media for his campaign.

"I have many supporters, we will launch a proxy campaign all over the country; I will optimize the use of information and communication technology in my campaign," he told reporters.

Trillanes said he has "volunteer networks" composed of relatives, friends and supporters in 77 provinces.

He said he would use the Internet, text messages, television and radio.

Trillanes said running for senator was "the only way through which I can continue battling corruption and fight for the common welfare."

"I have not been sullied by the kind of politics that we have and that makes me an ideal catalyst for change," he added.

Trillanes did not indicate what party nominated him or if he would be running as independent, writing "for filing later" on his papers.

His lawyer Reynaldo Robles said that if Trillanes is not drafted by the United Opposition, he would run as an independent. *With Belle Yambao*

Camarines gov cleared of graft raps

By Norman Bordadora

THE SANDIGANBAYAN HAS DISMISSED graft charges against Camarines Norte Gov. Jesus Typoco arising from the provincial government's alleged non-payment of P15 million worth of fertilizers and farm equipment delivered to the province in 2001.

The antigraft court said the case against Typoco did not constitute graft but "a simple case of non-payment" involving an ordinary contract of purchase and sale.

It said the complainant was making the court his collecting agent. "This we will not allow," the Sandiganbayan said.

The case stems from a complaint filed by Ildefonso Macaraig, who alleged that his company has yet to receive payment for fertilizers, furniture and farm equipment it delivered to the provincial government in 2001.

The Ombudsman found probable cause and charged Typoco.

The Sandiganbayan created a division of five justices to handle the case after the Second Division chaired by Associate Justice Edilberto Sandoval failed to come up with a unanimous decision.

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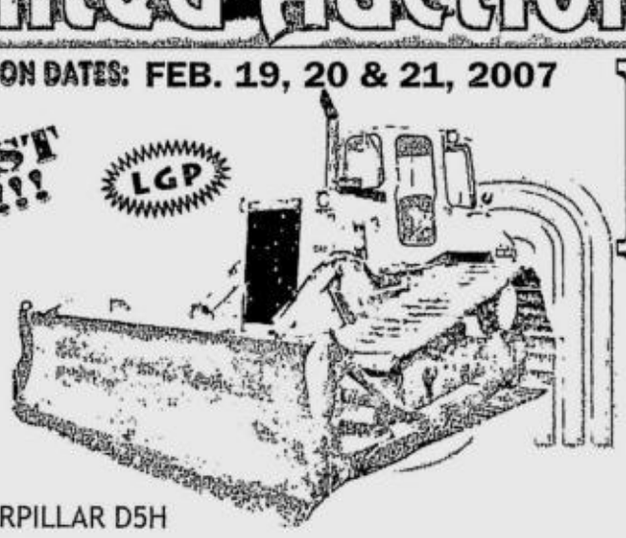

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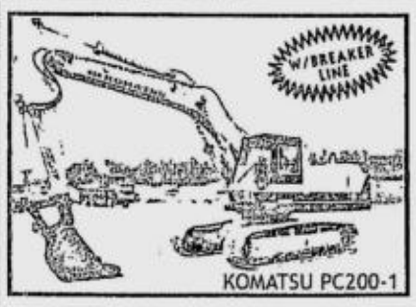

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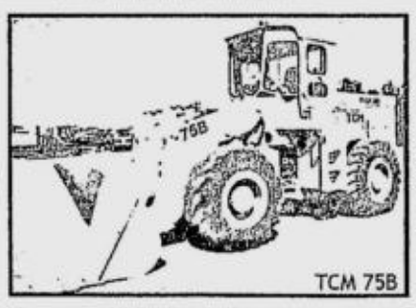

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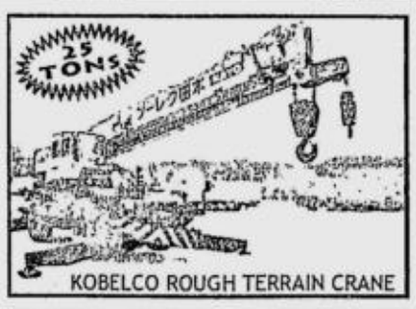

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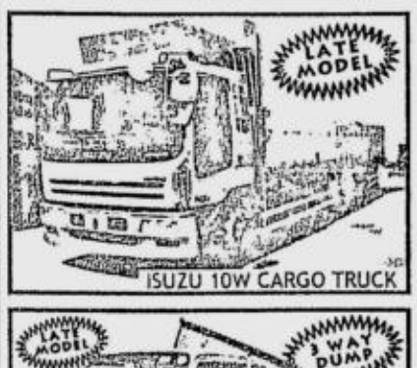

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RP, Afghanistan most deadly for journalists

HONG KONG—THE PHILIPPINES AND Afghanistan were the most dangerous places for journalists in Asia in 2006, while the media in Thailand suffered under a new military government and dozens of reporters remained behind bars in China, a US media rights group said Tuesday in its annual report.

"We look at most countries in Asia, and we see a real step backward," said Robert Dietz, Asia coordinator for the Committee to Protect Journalists. "Things don't look good. We don't see any positive trends."

The New York-based group said the Philippines and Afghanistan had the highest journalist deaths in the region last year. With three deaths each, the two countries ranked globally only behind Iraq, where 32 journalists were killed in 2006.

Other Asian flashpoints were Pakistan and Sri Lanka, where an escalating civil conflict continued to threaten the lives of reporters, the group said. Two journalists were killed in Pakistan last year, while Sri Lanka recorded one such death, it said.

Thailand saw a great setback in press freedom in 2006, when a military coup immediately increased pressure on journalists, Dietz said.

Shortly after the military took power in September, it shut down hundreds of community radio stations and censored foreign broadcasts about the coup.

"A year of political turmoil climaxed in a military coup that accelerated the deterioration of Thailand's press freedom climate," the group's report said.

Worldwide, 55 journalists were killed in direct connection to their work in 2006, Dietz said. Another 30 deaths were being investigated to determine whether they also were linked to the journalists' work.

Meanwhile, the total number of journalists jailed worldwide rose to 134 in 2006—nine more than a year earlier. *AP*

Another Pinoy seized in Nigeria

PORT HARCOURT—NIGERIAN GUNMEN ABducted a Filipino and shot dead the policeman escorting him on the road to Port Harcourt in the oil-producing Niger Delta on Tuesday, a security expert working for a major oil firm said.

The Philippines had ordered its labor department to block workers from going to Nigeria after 24 Filipino seamen were seized on Jan. 20 in the delta, where kidnappings for ransom are an almost daily event. The seamen are still being held in captivity.

"One Filipino was abducted this morning close to Owerri airport on the road to Port Harcourt. Gunmen in a van blocked the expat, who had a mobile policeman in his car. They shot and killed the policeman and abducted the expat," the source said.

It was unclear who the Filipino was working for.

Police in Owerri said they had no information about the incident while police in Port Harcourt said they had heard reports of the abduction but had no official confirmation. A Philippine Embassy spokesperson was not immediately available.

Port Harcourt airport has been closed since last August so people traveling to the city by air fly to Owerri and drive from there. The drive takes two to three hours and most foreigners take a police escort.

Violence surged in the Niger Delta last year and it has worsened since the start of 2007. Tuesday's abduction brings to 30 the number of foreigners being held by different armed groups across the delta.

A fifth of oil production capacity from Nigeria, the world's eighth-biggest exporter of crude, has been shut down for a year because of militant attacks on oil facilities.

Foreign telecom and construction workers as well as seamen have been targeted. The 24 Filipinos were seized from a German-operated cargo ship on a river in the western delta. *Reuters*

Wedding video tags more suspects in Bersamin slay

By Alcuin Papa

THE VIDEO FOOTAGE OF THE wedding attended by Rep. Luis Bersamin just before he was shot dead may hold the key to solving the murder of the Abra congressman.

Criminal Investigation and Detection Group officials yesterday said that based on the video of the Dec. 16 wedding, they have identified more suspects in the Bersamin slay case.

"We reviewed the tape of the wedding and pinpointed additional suspects," said Director Edgardo Doromal, the CIDG chief.

He said he is consulting with other members of Task Force Bersamin and members of the Bersamin family to identify the people shown on the video footage.

Investigators are particularly interested in persons appearing in the video who are not known to the Bersamin family and who were not invited to the wedding.

"Once we have identified these suspects, we can arrest them. We know for a fact that one of them has a standing warrant for his arrest. So there is some light now," Doromal said.

Sr. Supt. Magtanggol Gatdula, the Quezon City police chief and a member of Task Force Bersamin, said investigators were focusing on persons "acting unnaturally" during the wedding.

He said using information from Task Force Abra and the video, they would be able to determine if these persons were wanted felons.

Because of the recent violence in the province, the Philippine National Police has taken police control of Abra. Task Force Abra, headed by Sr. Supt. Eugene Martin, was sent to enforce the law in Abra, disarm armed groups, arrest violators of the election gun ban and other persons with standing arrest warrants.

Bersamin was shot to death at the Mt. Carmel Church compound on Dec. 16 right after attending the wedding of a niece.

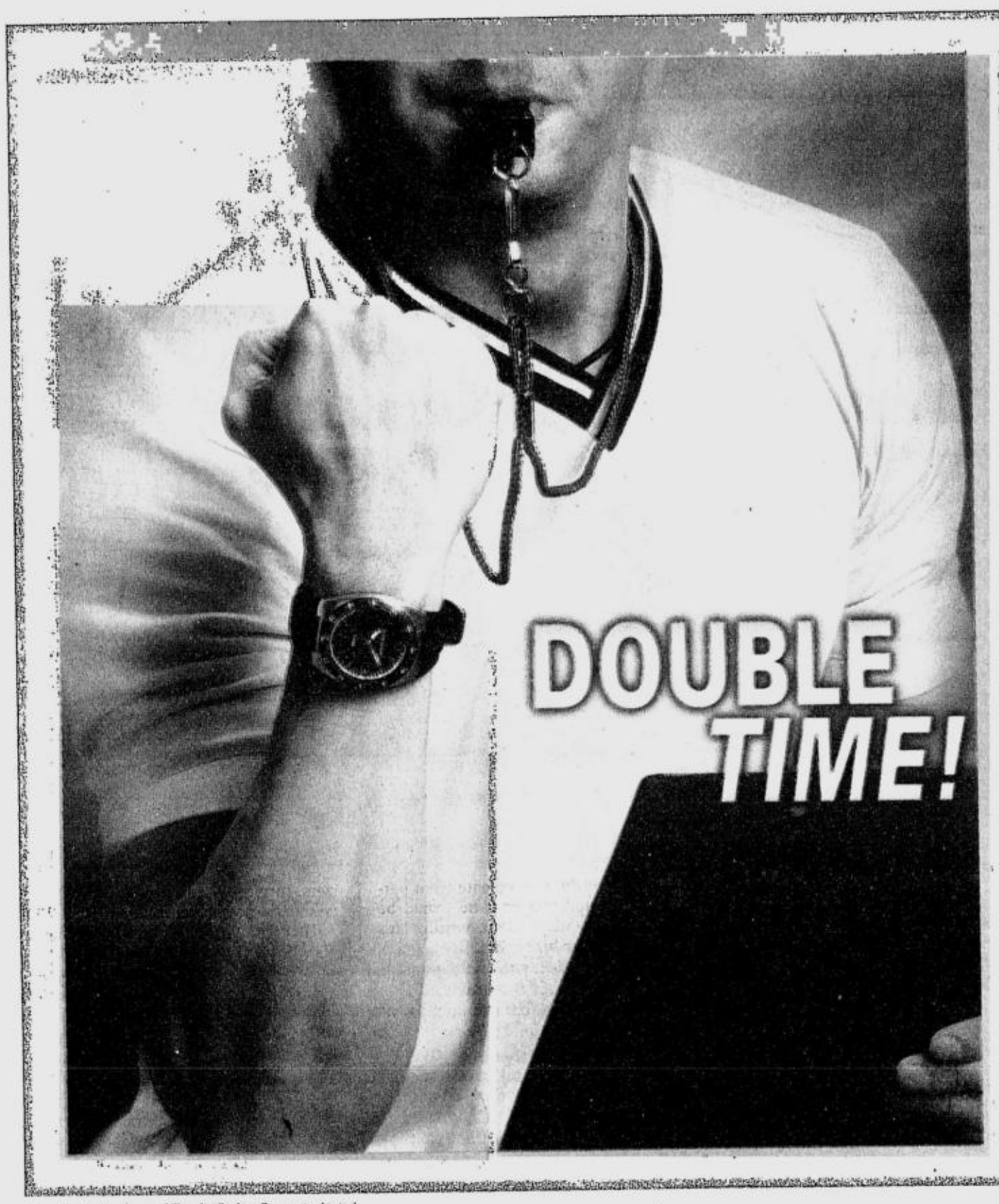
Police have identified four suspects—Rufino Panday, Freddie Dupo, Dominador Barbosa and Sonny Taculao. Based on witnesses' accounts, there are two more unidentified suspects in the killing.

Panday, who was arrested a few days after the murder, implicated Dupo, a former vice mayor of La Paz, Abra, and Abra Gov. Vicente Valera in the murder of Bersamin.

He said Dupo had told him before the murder that Valera had put up P5 million for the murder of Bersamin. Panday said Dupo was recruiting him to join the hit team.

But Panday later withdrew his confession. He is still under police custody.

Valera has denied Panday's claims.



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'Sleeping with the enemy' an eye-opener for gov't exec

By Julie S. Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—FOR RAMON Santos, sleeping with the "enemy" meant a chance to have a deeper understanding of the Moro struggle in the south.

Santos, undersecretary at the Office of the Presidential Adviser to the Peace Process, was one of 22 members of a peace mission detained in a Moro National Liberation Front camp in Bitan-ag, Panamao, for two nights last weekend.

"I realized that these people are willing to lay down their firearms provided their security is guaranteed," Santos said of the person-to-person talks he had with MNLF subcommanders, village leaders, women, youth and children.

"They are very much willing to leave their firearms behind, provided that shelter, education and health care [services] are delivered," Santos added.

While inside the MNLF camp, Santos said he was able to move around freely, holding consultations for "social data gathering" as part of a government plan to hold a workshop with the local folk.

"It's an initial step for social preparation that allows us to adjust to their pace. We have (our) pace and they cannot cope with our pace of community planning," Santos said.

"NEVER FORGET TO BRING YOUR TOOTHBRUSH," Undersecretary Ramon Santos can now joke about his detention and that of his fellow peace mission panelists inside the MNLF camp. JULIE S. ALIPALA/INQUIRER MINDANAO

HOSTAGED BUT HOSTED: Maj. Gen. Dolorfino answers questions from the members of the Commission on Appointments about his detention at the MNLF camp over the weekend. Yes, he was in fact held hostage but at the same time was treated like a special guest, he says. ROGER MARGALLO

New ways

Presidential peace adviser Jesus Dureza said the weekend incident offered new approaches to community planning.

"I look at it as an opportunity and as a challenge," Dureza said.

He said programs lined up for implementation in Sulu included creation of a joint media information office, organizing women and children into a Mothers and Daughters for Peace group, and setting up of a concrete peace monitoring structure.

Road map to development

Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, who led the peace mission, said that was the same goal for the province outlined in his paper, "Sulu Road Map, A Journey to Peace and Development."

Dolorfino said the road map intended to correct errors of the past.

Job must be finished

"As stakeholders, we need to nurture peace not just by uprooting the root causes [of the conflict] but tearing down as well the walls that divide us," Dolorfino said in his Road Map to Peace presentation.

Santos agreed.

"Many weeds, many stones, we need to clear that. We are now building a road widening away from violence," he said.

Santos and Dolorfino have asked Dureza to allow them to continue what they had started in Sulu.

"Peace cannot be achieved overnight, I want to return there," Dolorfino said.

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MNLF willing to lay down arms if other armed groups are also disarmed

By Jeoffrey Maitem and Julie Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

COTABATO CITY—A TOP OFFICIAL OF THE Moro National Liberation Front said yesterday MNLF guerrillas would lay down their arms only if the government disarmed all militias and the private armies of politicians.

MNLF Secretary General Muslimin Sema described as "next to impossible" the proposal by presidential adviser Jesus Dureza for the MNLF and other groups to give up their weapons as a step towards genuine peace in Mindanao.

"But we welcome the proposal. That matter is good for discussion," he said.

Sema said the issue of disarmament had been discussed before but nothing happened.

"This is not new. We will only lay down our guns if the government will also disarm militias and private armies," Sema said.

He said disarming militias and private armies would help ensure there would be no more abuses against civilians. If that happened, there would be no need for MNLF members to carry guns anymore, he said.

The 1996 peace agreement between the government and the MNLF is silent on the issue of disarming the guerrillas.

The disarmament proposal reemerged after MNLF forces in Sulu held hostage for two nights last weekend a 22-member government team led by Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino and Peace Undersecretary Ramon Santos. *(Story on Page A1.)*

Tripartite talks

Interviewed on ANC network, Dureza said the country could only achieve real peace in Mindanao when there were no longer loose firearms in the region.

Dureza said disarmament should include not only the MNLF but others as well.

"We are joking here, fooling ourselves if we say that there's going to be sustainable peace (even if there is) a proliferation of high powered offensive weapons," Dureza added.

Dureza said the government should take up the matter during proposed tripartite talks with the MNLF and the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Only 'a dream'

"They say it's a dream but for me, we have to address this," he said.

Ustadz Habier Malik, spiritual adviser of the MNLF band that detained Dolorfino's party, denied reports (not in the INQUIRER) that ransom was paid for the release of the group.

"The reports are so erroneous," he said in Filipino.

Malik said the government party had gone to the MNLF camp to negotiate a settlement with the families of 10 MNLF members slain in a Jan. 18 clash in Patikul.

Seminar for media people

"Among Christians, that is called *abuloy* (donation). For us here, that is financial assistance. That is not ransom," Malik said.

Malik said if the financial assistance—variously reported to range from P350,000 to P450,000—would be cause for another problem, they were willing to return it.

Malik suggested that some journalists be given a seminar on the culture of the Tausugs so they would become more circumspect in their reporting. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

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[1] A full listing of the Eligible Bonds can be found in the Offering Circular dated 6 February 2007 which is available on the website of the Bureau of the Treasury (www.treasury.gov.ph)

General finally admits . . .

From page A1

Despite Dolorfino's testimony at the CA, Armed Forces spokesperson Lt. Col. Bartolome Bacarro stuck to the official line that the peace mission was not taken hostage.

"It was not a hostage-taking situation," he said.

Bacarro got in touch with Dolorfino after the general's appearance before the CA, and told reporters: "He said he was taken out of context. He was asked if it was a hostage-taking. He said it depends on the one looking at the incident."

Dolorfino, however, was quick to tell CA members that there were circumstances during their detention that indicated he and his team were being merely "hosted" by the MNLF.

"There are other elements to (show) that we were just hosted because we were treated well," the Marine general said.

Crime of coercion

"[MNLF commander] Habier Malik was very apologetic ... He (served us) a lot of food. When I heard the night of Saturday that they were slaughtering a cow, I sensed that we would be released the following day."

The CA defense committee, chaired by Rep. Jurdin Jesus Romualdo, later recommended to today's plenary the approval of Dolorfino's appointment to major general, as well as the promotion of 13 other officers.

At his own confirmation hearings, Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said the Jolo incident constituted at least the crime of coercion, but stressed that this should not be pursued if only to preserve the gains of the 1996 peace agreement with the MNLF.

"Strictly speaking, when there was an admission that they were hostaged, that means that there was at least the crime of coercion that was committed, or illegal detention because that was for more than three days," Gonzalez told reporters after the hearing.

Caution needed

"But, considering that things have sort of simmered down and there's nobody complaining about it, I don't think there is a need to pursue that because that would only place a wrinkle on the peace process," he added.

The CA committee on justice deferred consideration of Gonzalez's appointment pending submission of more documents by an opposer, Manila assistant prosecutor Ferrer Co, who claimed Gonzalez was unfit for the post because of his inconsistent resolutions on some cases.

Dolorfino himself said it would be unwise for the government to take retaliatory action against the MNLF because this might jeopardize the tactical cooperation with the former rebel group.

Fight on two fronts

"I believe there's a very high national interest in this," Dolorfino told CA members. "We are having an operation against Abu Sayyaf and Jemaah Islamiyah, and it took us a very hard time to destroy the ... unholy alliance between (them)."

"If we announce a retaliatory action against the MNLF in Sulu, we will go back to square one, in which it will be very hard for us to operate because there will be two groups we will be confronting in that island," he said. *With a report from Dona Pazzibugan*

Pentagon gang behind Cotabato jailbreak, says MILF

COTABATO CITY—THE RAID ON the North Cotabato provincial jail in Kidapawan City last Friday that resulted in the escape of 48 inmates was carried out by the Pentagon gang and not the Moro Islamic Liberation Front, the MILF said yesterday.

Eid Kabalu, MILF spokesperson, said the group had received information that Alonto Tahir, one of the Pentagon gang's leaders, had led the raid.

Around 25 heavily armed men stormed the jail in order to spring four inmates suspected of involvement in the 2003 Kidapawan bombing. In the process, the other inmates were able to escape.

Of the escapees, only one has been recaptured.

The military had previously claimed it had killed Tahir in an attack on a Pentagon hideout in the Liguasan Marsh in 2004.

The Pentagon leader, who is a diabetic, turned out to be alive, Kabalu said.

"It only shows that we had nothing to do with the jailbreak," Kabalu said.

He said the Pentagon raided the jail to free a close friend of Alonto's. He did not identify the prisoner, however.

He said the MILF was helping the government track down the escapees as part of its commitment to the peace process.

"Our troops have been mobilized to track them," Kabalu said.

But Lt. Col. Julieto Ando, spokesperson of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the military still believed Alonto had been killed in the Liguasan Marsh in 2004.

Catholic priests kidnapping

"But we are looking into allegations that Alonto and his men were involved in the raid," Ando said.

The Pentagon, blamed for at least 50 abductions in Mindanao, gained notoriety after it kidnapped Catholic priests in central and western Mindanao.

One of those it snatched was Italian priest Fr. Giuseppe Pierantoni on Oct. 17, 2001, while he was officiating a Mass in Dimataling, Zamboanga del Sur.

The group also kidnapped five Chinese engineers working on a government irrigation project in North Cotabato and their Filipino guide in May 2001.

Four of the Chinese engineers were killed in the crossfire during a military rescue operation in June of that year.

Shoot-to-kill orders

Philippine National Police Director General Oscar Calderon, meanwhile, has issued shoot-to-kill orders against the escapees who resist arrest.

"By provisions of the law, they can be subjected to citizen's arrest. For our law enforcement, we will apply the full force of the law," Calderon told reporters.

When asked if this meant escapees who resisted would be shot, Calderon said, "*Ganoon na rin yon* (That's basically it.)"

Several of the inmates had cases involving heinous crimes.

North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol has put up a P25,000 reward for the capture of each inmate. He also apologized to President Macapagal-Arroyo for the prison break. The jail is under the supervision of the local government.

'Laudable act'

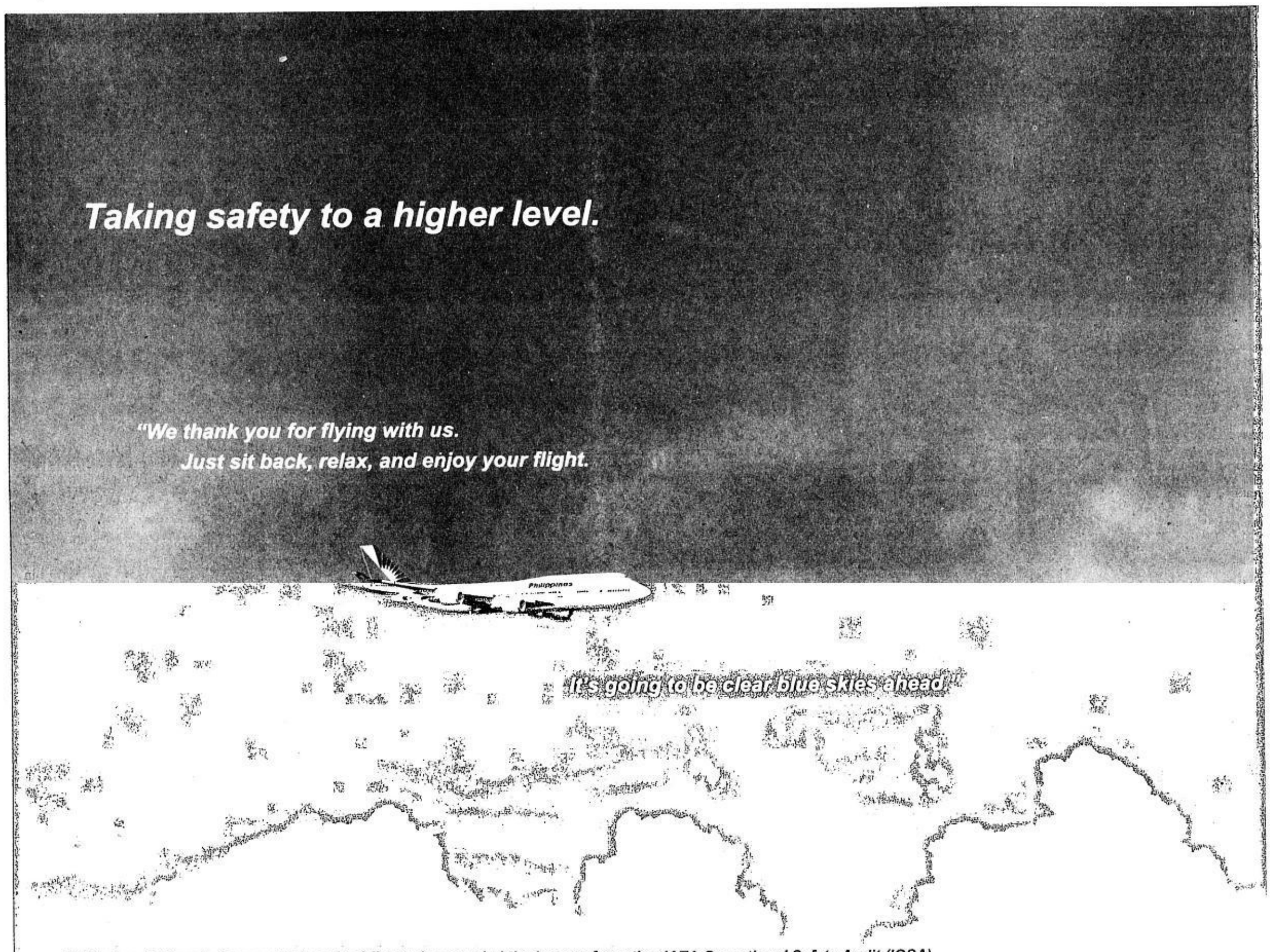
Piñol said he would also seek a reinvestigation of the bombing charges against Kule Mamagong, a detained MILF leader who refused to join the jailbreak.

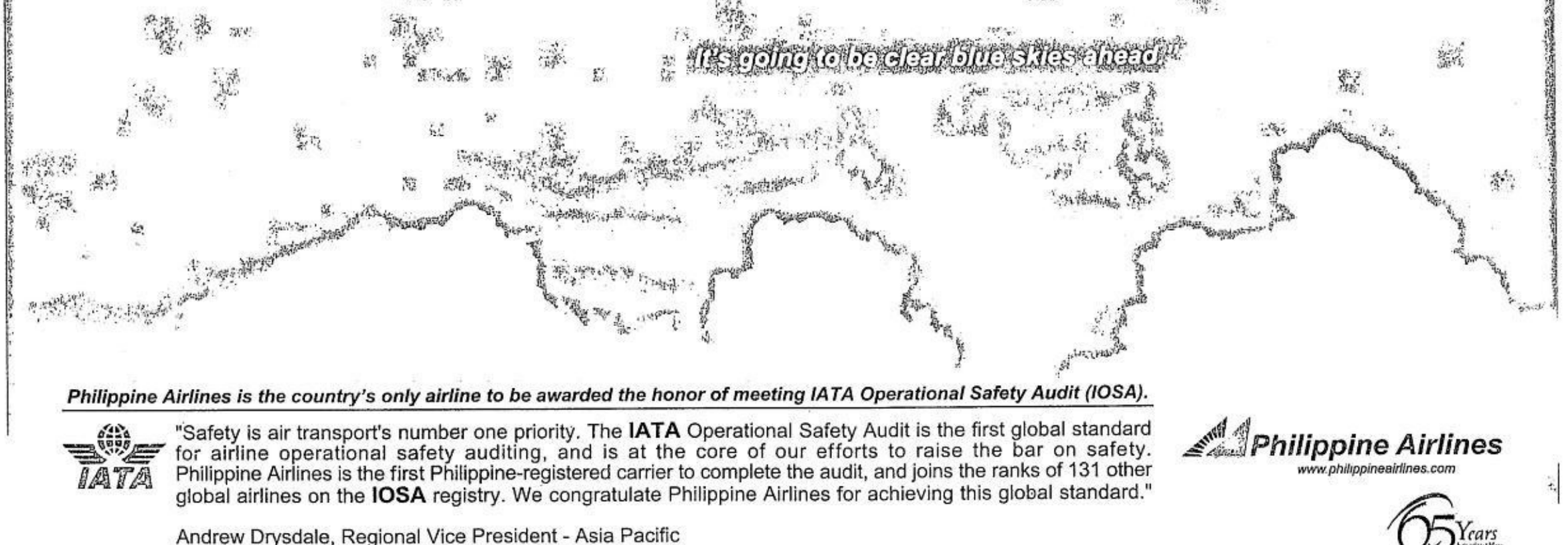
Piñol said Mamagong's refusal to join the escapees "was a laudable act that must be given recognition."

"I am innocent of the charges. Why should I flee with them? I will prove my innocence in court," said Mamagong when asked why he did not join the jailbreak.

Calderon said the jailbreak was not connected to the police raid on a hideout of suspected MILF bombers in Taytay, Rizal, last Thursday.

Police had said the three suspects arrested in the raid—Sandiali Utto, Jukarnen Utto and Alimuddin Abdullah—were bomb experts belonging to the MILF Special Operations Group that was supposedly coddling Abu Sayyaf terror group members in Metro Manila. *Edwin O. Fernandez, Jeoffrey Maitem and Eldie Aguirre, Inquirer Mindanao; Alcuin Papa in Manila*





Asia's crammed cities need infrastructure investment

MORE THAN 1 BILLION PEOple are expected to join Asia's crammed cities in the next 20 years, where pollution and lack of infrastructure will make their lives more miserable without effective urban management, the Asian Development Bank said.

Asia faces urban challenges that are unprecedented in history, M. Ramachandran, secretary of India's Ministry of Urban Development, told government officials, experts and donors meeting Tuesday in Manila to discuss massive demographic and social changes in the region.

Asia's cities account for half the world's urban dwellers, with a combined population of 1.56 billion that is expected to reach 2.6 billion in 25 years, Ramachandran said. They already are grappling with inadequate infrastructure and services as well as pressures from globalization and decentralization.

"Although the incidence of poverty has declined in Asian countries, thanks to sustained and robust economic growth ... in recent years, approximately 25-30 percent of urban population live in slums, squatter settlements and substandard housing," Ramachandran said.

On-premises tap water is available only to half of the total urban households in India, and only to 38 percent of the slum households in East Asia, he said.

Ramachandran urged the Manila-based Asian Development Bank to increase its financial participation in urban projects and assist local governments in providing access to funds for urban development.

The ADB and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development—the conference co-sponsors—proposed establishment of an Asian Cities Development Initiative to train and assist officials and help find financiers for infrastructure investment. *AP*

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Asia now one of world's fastest growing . . .

From page A1

cent.

Workers in Indonesia and China come in a close second and third, with real wage increases forecast at about 6 percent.

In comparison, salaries for workers in Slovakia may grow by 3.5 percent in real terms this year—the fastest expected pace of growth outside Asia—while American workers may only see their wages inch up 1.1 percent.

"In India, companies are growing, the gross domestic product is growing, so there stands good reason that people should be earning more," Quane said.

He added that workers in India's business process outsourcing and technology sectors, which had the highest labor turnovers, were likely to see the sharpest wage increases.

Vietnamese workers, on the other hand, may see the lowest pace of real wage growth in Asia in 2007 because of high inflation rate. *Reuters*

Anti-fat underwear now on sale . . .

From page A1

But opinion was divided on whether high-tech fabrics encapsulating slimming agents, perfumes and creams would be a lasting addition to wardrobes or a passing fad.

"There are a lot of brands that have worked on the idea but there has never been a paradigm shift. What interests consumers in the end are fairly traditional products," said Hubert Lafont, chief executive of Barbara, a leading French lingerie firm.

Several companies have proved the technology works and can be a commercial success. Others have since abandoned production.

Philippe Andrieu began his company Onixxa in 2003 with just one product—a pair of tights with a slimming agent in them.

Now he has over 30 garments, including slimming jeans, under the Lytess trade mark, and annual sales of $5.9 million.

He expects turnover to quadruple by 2009, and said the total market could be worth up to about $650 million.

"Adidas is coming. Nike will follow and L'Oreal is interested," he said. "We have proved it works."

All about well-being

Canadian textiles giant Invista, part of privately held Koch Industries, launched its brand of cosmeto-textiles under the Lycra Body Care trademark two and a half years ago and now has clients around the world, including men and women's underwear makers and manufacturers of socks and tights.

The textiles—containing aloe vera moisturizers, nutrients derived from seaweed or perfumes—are promoted as making people feel fresh or cool or to help keep skin moist.

"This is all about well-being and emotions rather than providing therapeutic benefit," said Fiona Paul, an Invista spokesperson.

Limited life

Existing cosmeto-textiles contain microscopic capsules of cosmetics that break as the fabrics rub skin, releasing the active ingredients. Invista's capsules come from International Flavors and Fragrances, while Onixxa's are made by French group Robert Blondel SA.

The active life of any garment is limited to between 20 and 40 washes, depending on the ingredient, and—so say skeptics—this is the main drawback.

Panties with moisturizer

"We don't promote this product any more. It was our first trial," said Daisuke Utaka on the stand of La Cle International, a Japanese company that launched a line of panties containing a skin moisturizer derived from rice two years ago.

"We still believe the idea is good but ... I don't think consumers want this yet," he added.

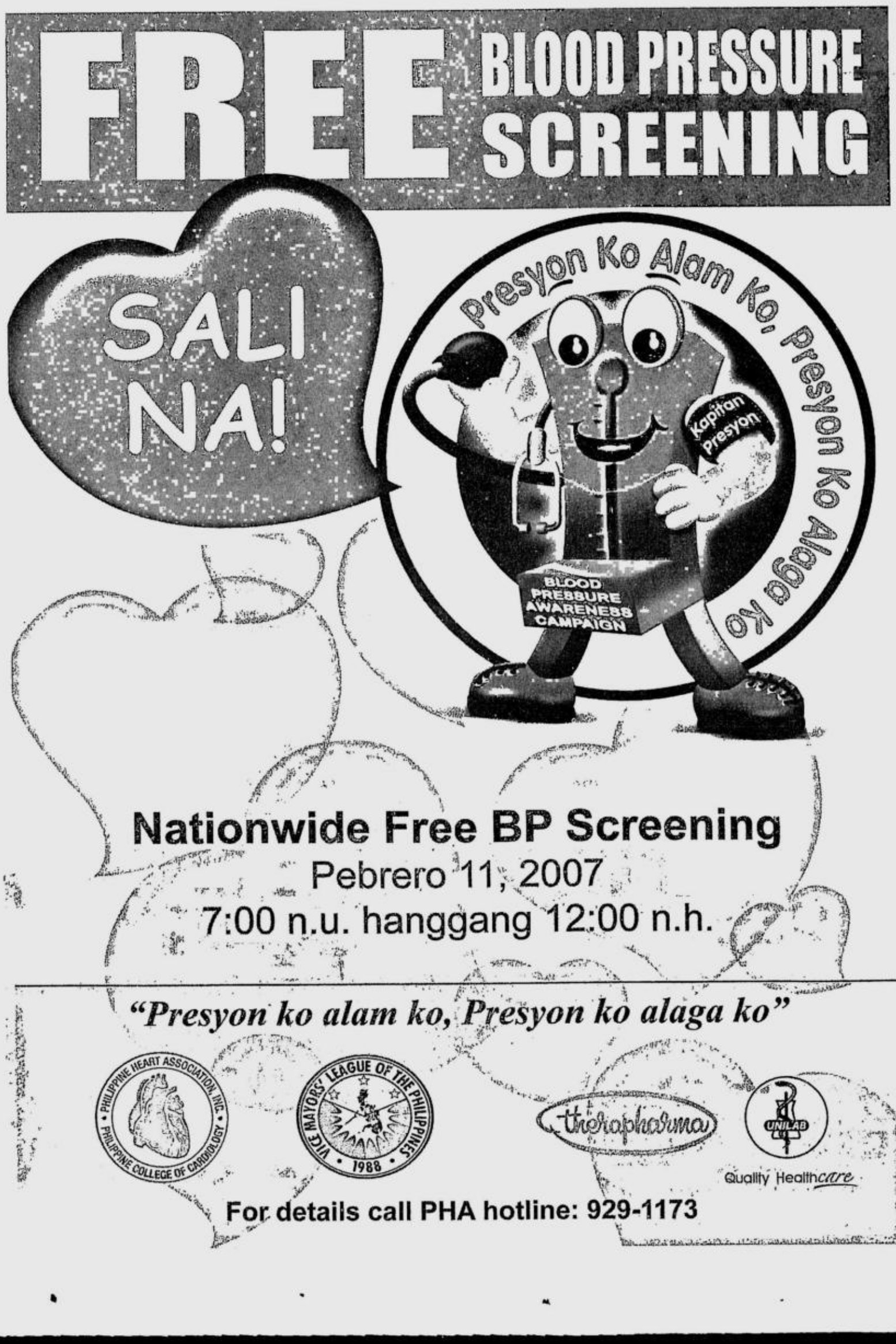
Blondel chief executive Yann Balguerie expected perceptions to change in three years when European standard-setters have created common rules for the sector, which currently has to comply with both cosmetic industry and textile regulations.

As an interim solution, the French industry—which is getting strong government support—will this month launch a quality label to encourage take up of the technology, he said.

Anti-bacteria

Already others have gone further. An Italian company, Bio-Farm, was promoting a textile comprising nano-particles of silver that kills bacteria on skin, among other properties.

"The difference between this material and micro-capsules is that it lasts for life and doesn't release any active substance," said Marketing Adviser Moreno Cremaschi. *Reuters*



Fil-Ams to invest P150M in AFP bank 'for heroes'

From page A1

CSB said the entry of the OFW investor group would "further realize the bank's main objective to be the bank of the real and living heroes, the uniformed men and women and the overseas Filipinos."

"The stakeholders of the bank view this as a very timely move that will maximize the bank's potential," the bank said.

CSB was established in 1998 by the AFP Savings and Loan Association Inc. and the AFP Mutual Benefits Association Inc. to cater to the banking needs of AFP members and small businessmen. Its main offices are located at Don Francisco Ortigas Street (formerly Emerald Avenue), Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

The thrift bank also has branches in Santa Rosa, Laguna, Villamor Air Base, Camp Aguinaldo and Baguio City.

AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Hermogenes C. Esperon Jr., who chairs CSB, recently witnessed the signing of the MOU that signaled the entry of overseas Filipinos as investors. Paul Ysmael and Nem Santos Jr., CSB president and Kapatiran secretary general, respectively, signed for their institutions.

1 million members

Founded in 1982, Kapatiran is the largest organization of Filipinos in North America with a membership of over a million Fil-Ams and Fil-Canadians. The organization links up with other Filipino organizations worldwide, like OFWNet Foundation, largest in the Middle East.

The organization has among its members businessmen, physicians, lawyers, accountants, engineers, nurses, bank and insurance executives, health care workers and Filipinos serving in the US military.

The bank said the three-way partnership assured CSB of a "stable financial backbone in the very competitive and challenging thrift banking industry."

"Moreover, the entry of Kapatiran paves the way for a more active participation of our overseas workers in the Philippine economy, consistent with the development agenda of the government," the bank said.

Resilient to shocks

Through the years, remittances from OFWs have made the Philippine economy more resilient to shocks that could otherwise slow down growth, worsen unemployment and put the country's external viability at risk. These inflows, estimated at $14 billion in 2006, are now equivalent to about a tenth of the country's gross domestic product and about 60 percent of the central bank's foreign reserves.

Migration is a way out of poverty for many households while the resulting inflows also effectively provide a buffer for the public sector whose external debts account for over 80 percent of the country's gross domestic product.

The Philippines is also seen sitting on a potential gold mine with its large pool of expatriates who intend to settle back in the country and could thus become a significant economic force of the future.

A million cases clogging RP courts, says prosecutor

THE JUDICIARY HAS A HUGE backlog of about a million criminal and civil cases, according to the National Prosecution Service, the prosecutor arm of the justice department.

This backlog is symptomatic of the flaws, even the breakdown, of the country's justice system, state prosecutor Geronimo Sy told a House inquiry yesterday into the extra-judicial killings of militants and journalists.

Sy said the blame for the clogged court dockets can be laid at Congress' door for continuing to make laws that have resulted in the country's "over-criminalization."

When faced with a social problem, the first tendency of legislators was to make it a criminal act, he said. Thus, penalties are imposed for "any little action" or omission. As an example, he cited the criminalization of a mere traffic infraction like jaywalking.

"Before you know it, all the courts will be clogged with cases," said Sy.

Another example of misplaced legislation is the enactment of the Violence against Women and Children.

"Right now husbands and wives are facing hundreds of criminal cases for what are really family disputes," he said.

Yet another example is the anti-torture bill passed several months ago by the House, which Sy believes to be superfluous.

Sy said that as far as he could see, the only purpose for passing the law was that Congress wanted to impress the people that it does not condone or tolerate torture of any kind.

"But from the criminal standpoint, it really does not serve any additional purpose," said Sy, pointing out that the elements of torture were contained in the Revised Penal Code which already has provisions for its punishment.

According to Sy, what Congress needed to do was to pass a law that would "bring our penal code and our rules of court up-to-date because we're still using the American system ... which does not even define cybercrime." *Michael Lim Ubac*

Makiling story corrected

By Marlon Ramos
Inquirer Southern Luzon

THIS IS TO CORRECT A PART OF the story "Makiling swallowed his family," published on the front page of the INQUIRER on Oct. 2, 2006.

The article quotes Sofia Toledo as telling this correspondent that her husband had been languishing in jail for five years for the crime of murder which he allegedly did not commit.

To make both ends meet, Toledo said she worked as a stall keeper at the public market in Biñan, Laguna.

She said these were the reasons why neither she nor her husband was with their children when a mudslide swept away their house in Barangay Bagong Silang, Los Baños at the height of typhoon "Milenyo."

Toledo, who lost three of her children in the mudslide which claimed the lives of 11 other people, asked the INQUIRER to help her seek permission from Laguna Gov. Teresita "Ningning" Lazaro to let her husband visit the wake of their children.

Toledo also sought help to speed up the court hearings on her husband's case.

Court records showed that since the murder case was filed against Toledo's husband in 2001, Judge Medel Arnaldo B. Belen of Branch 36 of the Calamba City Regional Trial Court had consistently held hearings regarding the matter.

In fact, the Toledos have been attending the court hearings on the case.

Toledo's brother-in-law, a co-accused in the murder case, has been acquitted. On Aug. 1, 2006, after Belen moved to end the court hearings, Toledo's counsel even asked for more time to present additional witnesses.

The defense counsel, however, failed to do so and again asked Belen for an extension.

This correspondent had no intention whatsoever to affect the criminal case involving Toledo's husband.

The phrase pertaining to the court case was mentioned just to give the readers a picture of the hard life that the Toledos were experiencing.

This correspondent had no intention to question the credibility of the court and of Judge Belen.

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Guidelines for organ donations eyed

THE GOVERNMENT WILL BEGIN consulting on guidelines for human organ donations to foreigners, a government official said yesterday.

At present there are no specific rules on organ donation to foreigners.

Much of the trade in human organs, especially kidneys, takes place on the black market.

Health Undersecretary Jade del Mundo said organ donation was big business in the Philippines, especially among the poor, who sell their kidneys.

A study conducted recently by the University of the Philippines found that in one slum area in Manila, there were 3,000 men and women who had sold one of their kidneys for P70,000-P120,000.

Starting this weekend, the government will begin a series of consultations with private and public health sector leaders on how to regulate organ donation in the "face of rampant, under-the-table traffic in human organs," Del Mundo said.

He said the government was looking at ways of regulating the process by which kidneys were obtained.

A report in a Japanese newspaper recently said that if the system of organ donation were regulated, the Philippines could see a rush of foreign patients, including from Japan, where 10,000 people are currently awaiting kidney transplants. *AFP*

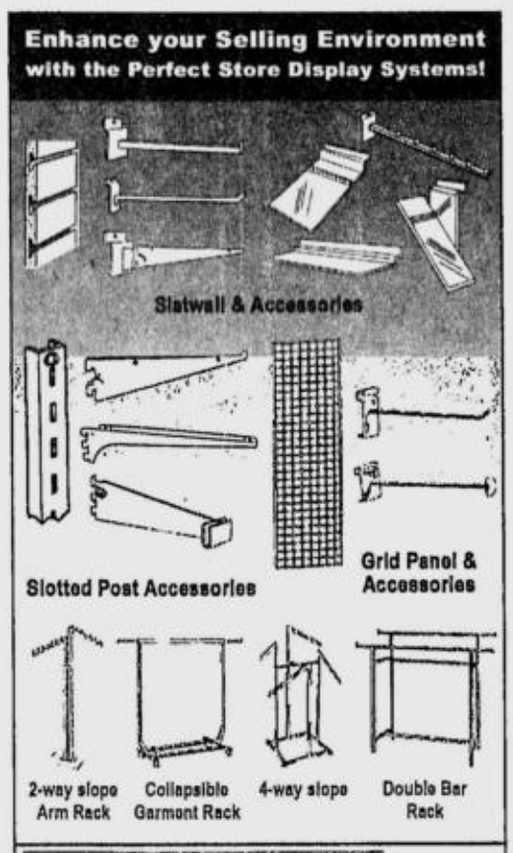
Coco oil forum today

THE NATIONAL ACADEMY OF Science and Technology (NAST) will present for the first time the state-of-the-art application of virgin coconut oil in a scientific symposium today at the Traders Hotel on Roxas Blvd., Manila.

The symposium is supported by the private sector, represented by VCO Philippines, and the government, led by the Department of Agriculture, the Philippine Coconut Authority, and the Department of Trade and Industry.

Business, science and government stakeholders are invited to the one-day affair that will start with registration at 8 a.m. Symposium of speakers is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

A session fee of P1,500 covers lunch and coffee break.



THE DAILY GOSPEL

Wednesday, February 7, 2007
5th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: Gen 2:4-9, 15-17
Gospel: Mark 7:14-23

Jesus called the people to him again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and try to understand. Nothing that enters one from outside can make that person unclean. It is what comes out from within that makes unclean. Let everyone who has ears listen."

When Jesus got home and was away from the crowd, his disciples asked him about this saying and he replied, "So even you are dull? Do you not see that whatever comes from outside cannot make a person unclean? Since it enters, not the heart but the stomach and is finally passed out."

Thus Jesus declared that all foods are clean.

And he went on, "What comes out of a person is what defiles, for evil designs come out of the heart: theft, murder, adultery, jealousy, greed, maliciousness, deceit, indecency, slander, pride and folly. All these evil things come from within and make a person unclean."

Commentary

Now another story of creation, though a bit different. After the earth and the heavens, there is a stream on the earth and then comes man—given the breath of life by God breathing into him! And there is a garden for the man to cultivate (a gardener) but he is not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil—a warning given.

And Jesus speaks about what is good and what is evil—only what comes out of a person can be impure or evil—not what goes in. What we do is what makes us destructive of others and ourselves: what's in the deep recesses of our hearts. It is what we do that makes us impure—incapable of seeing/knowing God who is good.

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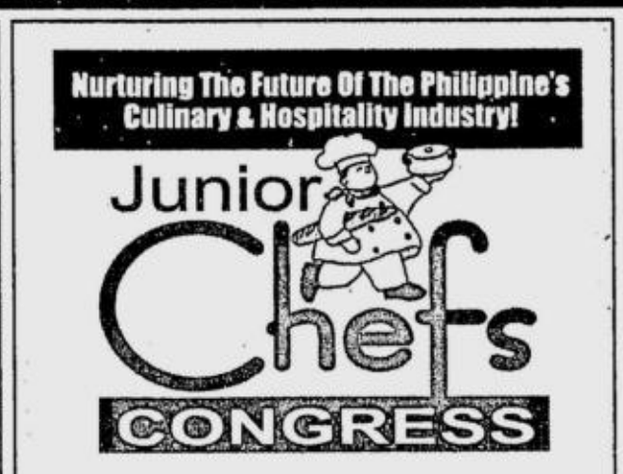

February 8-10, 2007 * World Trade Center

FOODBIZ EXPO ACTIVITIES — FREE ENTRANCE TO EXPO

FEBRUARY 8, 2007 (1st Day)
10am Your Road Map To A Successful Business (Free) - Room A
12nn Role Of DTI In SME Development (Free) - Room A
12nn Food Safety & Hygiene Awareness By Mantek (Free) - Room B
12nn Learn To Make Bitso-Bitso (Plain & W/ Fruit Fillings) & Fritters - Stage
1pm Running A Meat Shop Business In Your Home (P500) - Room A
2pm How To Start Your Business w/ P5,000 Capital (P500) Room B
5pm Starting a Business w/ Zero Capital by John Tan of Chef's Pride

FEBRUARY 9, 2007 (2nd Day)
10am The 7pt. Formula For Successful Foodcart Start-Up & Operations by Mark So, CEO, Businessmaker Academy (whole day, P2,500) - Rm A
10am Chocolate Making & Molding (P600) - Room B
10am Learn How To Decorate Cakes & Make Profit From It by Tess & Betsy Dilla of Sweet Home Bakeshop (Free) - Food Biz Stage
12nn Learn How To Make Pizza Dough & Variety of Toppings & Pasta Recipes (Free) - Food Biz Stage
2pm Baking Science & Putting Up Your Own Business by Emalyn Bernardo of San Miguel Flour Mills - (Free) Room B
3pm Baking Made Easy by Emalyn Bernardo of San Miguel Flour Mills - B
1pm How To Start Your Business by Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) (With Fee) Tel : 6383149 - Room C
5pm Learn The Business of Donut Making by Rod Gaddi of Pilmico Mauri
6pm How To Start An Electronic E-Loading Biz By E-Negosyo (Free) - Rm A

FEBRUARY 10, 2007 (3rd Day)
10am How To Start & Operate A Catering Business (P500) - Room A
10am Going Into The Dairy Business (P400) - Room B
11am Cooking Demo by Mega Sardines (Free) - Expo Stage
12nn Learn The Varieties of Rice Toppings & Barbeque Grills (Free) - Stage
1pm How To Franchise Your Business By PFA (With Fee) Tel : 6383149 - C
2pm Make Your Products Stand Out From The Shelves (The Right Packaging & Labeling For Your Food Products) (P500) - Room A
2pm Perfection: World's Hospitality Choice by Universal Weavers Corp. - B
3pm Wine Appreciation: With Application Of Wine To Food, Beverage Costing, Packaging For Gifts (P500) - Room B
4pm Learn How To Make Hopia Dimsum & Barbeque Grills (Free) - Stage
5pm Business That Fits Your Budget By JC Fran Corporation (Free) - Rm A

JR. CHEFS CONGRESS ACTIVITIES

FEBRUARY 8, 2007 (Thursday)
11am Popular Café Menus By JM Martinez- Owner, Green Tomato
12pm Childrens Party Specialty Menu By Chef Mike Crisologo, Executive Chef Of Enchanted Kingdom
12nn COMPETITION : CATERING OLYMPICS
2pm FORMAL OPENING
3pm How To Operate And Manage Your Catering Business
3pm COMPETITION : 12 EGGS

FEBRUARY 9, 2007 (Friday)
10am COMPETITION : KITCHEN DASH
12nn Techniques In Food Styling And Food Photography By Ms. Gina Navarro, Owner, Esteri's Caramel Cakes, Food Stylist Of Food Magazine, Abs-Cbn Publishing And Mark Floro Of Mark Floro's Photography
3pm COMPETITION : SALAD DRESSING FLAIRTENDING

FEBRUARY 10, 2007 (Saturday)
10am Banquet Event Order In The Perspective Of Banquet Operations
11am COMPETITION : CULINARY TALENT FAIR : THE SEARCH FOR FUTURE CELEBRITY CHEFS
1pm Western Cooking by Chef Gerd Menge (German) and Asian Cooking by Chef Manoj de Silva (Sri Lankan) both of ISCAHM
2pm COMPETITION : GO CART : MARKET BASKET COMPETITION
4pm Home Based Business Designed For Students
5pm AWARDING CEREMONIES

OTHER COMPETITIONS (DISPLAY CATEGORIES) :
INTIMATE TABLE SETTING FOR 2
VALENTINES CAKE (FREESTYLE - DISPLAY)

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ANNOUNCEMENT

The Judicial and Bar Council announces the opening of judgeship positions in the following courts for acceptance of applications:

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2. RTC, Br.116, Pasay City
3. METC, Brs. 6,20 & 29, Manila
4. METC, Br.72, Pasig City
5. RTC, Br.13, Lipa City, Batangas
6. RTC, Br.60, Lucena City, Quezon
7. RTC, Br.4, Dolores, Eastern Samar
8. RTC, Br.25, Siasi, Sulu
9. MTCC, Br. 4, Cagayan De Oro City
10. MTC, Mangatarem, Pangasinan
11. MTC, Umingan, Pangasinan
12. MTC, Baggao, Cagayan
13. MTC, Sta. Rita, Pampanga
14. MTC, Sta. Rosa, Laguna

Applications or recommendations must be submitted **NOT LATER THAN March 7, 2007**, to the JBC Secretariat, 2nd Flr. Centennial Bldg., Supreme Court, Padre Faura St., Manila (Tel.No.552-9512 Fax No.552-9598; e-mail address **jbc@supremecourt.gov.ph**; **JBC supremecourt@yahoo.com.ph**). Applicants must submit 6 copies of the following:

- Application or Recommendation Letter
- Personal Data Sheet (JBC Form I down-loadable from the JBC Website http://jbc.supremecourt.gov.ph)
- Picture (2x2)
- Certificate of Good Standing or latest Official Receipt from the IBP National Treasurer
- ITR for 2 preceding years
- Clearances from NBI, Ombudsman, Office of the Bar Confidant and employer
- Transcript of Records
- Police Clearance from place of residence
- Certificate of Admission to Bar (with Bar Rating)

The JBC also announces that the following are applicants for different judgeship positions:

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The public may submit sworn complaint, written report, or opposition against any of the aforesaid applicants not later than February 17, 2007.

February 6, 2007.

MA. LUISA D. VILLARAMA
Clerk of Court &
Ex-Officio Secretary

(PDI–February 7, 2007)

ADOPTION CONSCIOUSNESS DAY

DSWD advice: Adopt an orphan, legally

By Cynthia Balana

A TOTAL OF 1,622 ORPHANS PUT UP FOR adoption by the Department of Social Welfare and Development last year have found new homes and families, social welfare secretary Esperanza Cabral reported yesterday.

Cabral, who spearheaded the observance of "Adoption Consciousness Day" on Feb. 3, urged prospective adoptive parents to adopt children through legal means to protect the children from being exploited.

Adopted children, Cabral stressed, have the same rights and duties as the biological children of the adoptive parents, including the right to use the surname of the adoptive family.

Cabral encouraged prospective adoptive parents to go to a licensed adoption agency to ensure that proper procedures and processes are followed. These processes include counseling, matching or selection, supervised trial custody and finalization of adoption. A post-legal phase could also include a search for the roots or birth family of the child and possibly a reunion.

CABRAL

Help desks

The DSWD will also be setting up public "Adoption Help Desks" in popular malls such as those in Alabang Town Center, SM malls in Fairview, Bacoor and Manila, and at the Quezon City Memorial Circle. These desks will be manned by DSWD personnel and social workers from private child caring agencies, with volunteer law students on hand to answer queries.

She said that legal domestic adoption procedures take about nine months to one year, with the lawyer's fee as the major expense.

Intercountry adoption, on the other hand, takes about one to two years.

On Feb. 3, the DSWD sponsored activities in observance of "Adoption Consciousness Day," which has been set by Presidential Proclamation No. 72 on the first Saturday of February of every year.

The event was organized to attract public attention to the growing number of orphaned, abandoned or neglected Filipino children in need of an alternative, wholesome family environment.

Others agencies that participated in the event were the Intercountry Adoption Board (ICAB), attached agency of the DSWD; Association of Child Caring Agencies of the Philippines (ACCAP); Council for the Welfare of Children (CWC); Kaisahang Buhay Foundation (KBF); Foster Care Association of the Philippines (FCAP); Parenting Foundation of the Philippines Inc. (PFPI); and the Adoptive Families Foundation (AFF).

This year's observance focused on the theme "Wastong Pag-aampon, Bata at Pamilya may Proteksyon." (Proper Adoption: Protection for Children and Families).

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From page A1

positions up for grabs in the Senate.

Though he did not call for Ms Arroyo's resignation unlike his predecessor Sen. Franklin Drilon, Villar declined to run with the administration over differences in principle. He earlier said he could not run under the ticket of the administration, which has espoused the abolition of the Senate through Charter change.

Villar said he could run independently of any political alliance together with his colleagues—Senators Joker Arroyo, Ralph Recto and Francis Pangilinan—who are collectively known as the Wednesday Group.

Villar, listed No. 24 in Forbes magazine's richest people in Asia with $110 million in net worth, heads the Nacionalista Party, which counts Recto and opposition Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano as its senatorial candidates.

"We can have four, six or 12 (candidates)," Villar said, adding that this group could be classified as the "principled opposition."

But he said it was more likely that his group would join a coalition.

"The third force is actually the second force because, come to think of it, there are really only 18 (serious) candidates," Villar said.

Collapse of third force

Sen. Edgardo Angara said the attempt to put up a "third force," a slate of incumbent senators, had collapsed.

"Our third force has collapsed. The Wednesday Group may have also collapsed," Angara, head of Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino, told reporters.

He said he was consulting with party mates on Ms Arroyo's offer for him to join the administration's Team Unity ticket.

Villar expressed his inclination to run under the opposition ticket just hours before meeting with UNO president and Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay at the Shangri-La Hotel in Makati on Monday night.

They ironed out kinks in the negotiations for the inclusion of the Wednesday Group in the opposition slate.

Binay went to the Senate on Monday afternoon to meet with Villar but the meeting did not take place there. INQUIRER sources said Villar and Binay met instead at the hotel on Ayala Avenue at 7 p.m.

It was not known whether Villar sealed his entry into the opposition ticket during the meeting.

But he told the INQUIRER on Monday afternoon that the Wednesday Group, so-called because it meets every Wednesday, would make the final decision on its plans for the May 14 senatorial election at a meeting tonight.

Done deal

Despite playing coy about its plans, the Wednesday Group forming a coalition with the United Opposition was a "done deal," Sen. Panfilo Lacson said yesterday.

Pangilinan said that "things were still fluid," but remained hopeful the group would eventually join UNO.

A senator, who asked not to be named, said the Wednesday Group was deferring its announcement because Villar feared he could be ousted by administration allies in the chamber if he declared his decision to join the UNO earlier.

"It's a done deal. For reasons known to them, they're just delaying the formal coalition with the UNO slate," Lacson, one of the eight candidates drafted by the UNO-led coalition, told reporters.

The senator said Villar, Pangilinan and Recto had consistently told him they would run with UNO, while Arroyo had indicated that he would go with whatever ticket his three colleagues would choose to join.

"I still trust the words of the four gentlemen. I've talked to them as a group and as individuals, and they have time and again told me they would not change their minds," Lacson said. "I think eventually they will join UNO."

Miscommunication

He said he could not imagine the four not joining UNO because Villar's party mate, Cayetano, and Pangilinan's party mate, Rep. Benigno Aquino III, had been drafted into the UNO-led coalition.

Lacson believed that the kinks between the UNO and the Wednesday Group were just an offshoot of miscommunication.

The kinks emerged over the weekend when Pangilinan expressed dismay over the manner UNO was treating the Wednesday Group, and accused the UNO of dictating to the group with a "take it or leave it stance."

UNO leaders announced last week their eight official candidates, but left out Villar, Pangilinan, Recto and Arroyo. They were quick to assure the four, however, that the remaining slots were reserved for them.

The four senators, who formed the Wednesday Group when they were elected to their first term in 2001, will be joined at the meeting by Vice President Noli de Castro, who was originally part of the group when he was still a senator.

De Castro, an ally of Ms Arroyo, has vowed to campaign for the Wednesday Group.

The possibility of the Wednesday Group splitting loomed amid reports that Recto and Senator Arroyo were likely to join the administration slate.

Pangilinan, it was reported, was not acceptable to the opposition because of his role as "Mr. Noted," the co-presiding officer who simply noted objections of the opposition during the canvassing of the results of the 2004 presidential election.

Pangilinan, husband of popular actress-singer Sharon Cuneta, has also displeased the administration after he and Drilon of the Liberal Party called for Ms Arroyo's resignation at the height of the "Hello Garci" scandal in 2005.

Senator Arroyo, who is reportedly "not keen" on running, played a key role as a House prosecutor in the Senate impeachment trial of Estrada.

Villar was the Speaker when the House impeached Estrada in 2000, but the skillful politician has mended fences with the ousted President.

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The visits reportedly took pl
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Though he was gravitatin
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term in the chamber.

Differences

Villar, 57, who shot to natio
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ment, is seen as a potential p
candidate in 2010.

The Senate opposed the
campaign aimed at overha
Constitution and the move in
of Representatives to convene
to a constituent assembly to c
Constitution.

GMA allies in House

From page A1

subpoena documents and witnesses so that he could prepare his defense.

The committee thumbed down the plea and proceeded to resolve the complaints separately lodged by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo, his sons Rep. Juan Miguel and Diosdado, and brother Ignacio in September last year.

Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Villafuerte moved to vote on the merits of the complaints. He said that the committee should not expel Cayetano, but opt for a lesser penalty which he said was "reasonable enough."

Diosdado Arroyo said his family felt "vindicated," and that it respected the committee's decision of a lesser penalty.

Cayetano, who left before his suspension was announced, appeared unperturbed when he learned of it.

'Defeat of accountability'

"It's a victory of the Arroyos, the ethics committee and for bad governance, and it's the defeat of accountability and transparency in government," Cayetano said. He added that in the end, it was not he or the penalty that was important.

"The people were looking for an institution and a legal mechanism for finding out the truth. But the ethics committee denied the people this mechanism, so instead of the legislature providing a check and balance to the executive, it ended up protecting and covering up for the executive," said Cayetano.

"The charge is not the truth or falsity of the German account but that I engaged in disorderly behavior and for a congressman to have committed disorderly behavior, it must not only be baseless and false, but it must have been malicious and in complete disregard of the rights of the victim," said Cayetano.

The lawmaker insisted that if he were to be expelled based on his Sept. 5, 2006, privilege speech on the German account, more than half of the congressmen should also be expelled for the privilege speeches and resolutions made charging corporations and other people with anomalies.

He said that usually, an investigation was preceded by a privilege speech.

Inquiry premature

"In my case, after saying it in the impeachment, they voted not to investigate. Then instantly they filed an ethics case. In other words it's premature. They can't say I have no basis because they never investigated it in the proper forum."

Yesterday's hearing had earlier turned into an unruly screaming match.

Administration allies constantly jeered Cayetano as he sought to defend himself from the charge that he had committed improper conduct for accusing the First Family of having a fabulous sum deposited in HypoVereins Bank in Munich.

With time running out and the House set to adjourn today, the committee agreed to adopt the report of the fact-finding mission to Munich, which returned Monday night. The report "confirmed and ratified" the bank certifications earlier issued to Arroyo.

The new "expanded" certification, which was read to committee members and a national television audience by the mission headed by Rep. Roberto Cajes, stated that not one member of the Arroyo family had accounts or made transactions with the bank in the past 10 years.

Cajes also presented the waiver voluntarily signed by the First Gentleman in Munich which had authorized HypoVereins "to look into any and all accounts" of the Arroyos whether in its main office in Munich or any of its branches around the world.

The committee also overwhelmingly voted to deny the "demurrer to evidence" lodged

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Pichay is now on board Team Unity Senate slate

By Christine O. Avendaño, Gil C. Cabacungan Jr. and Cynthia D. Balana

SURIGAO DEL SUR REP. PROSPERO PICHAY, a staunch ally of President Macapagal-Arroyo, is now part of the administration's Team Unity senatorial ticket.

Ms Arroyo announced the inclusion of Pichay in Team Unity at a meeting she had with Lakas-CMD officials and members the other day in Malacañang, her political adviser Gabriel Claudio said yesterday.

Claudio said Pichay was endorsed by Lakas officials and the League of Provinces of the Philippines.

Pichay became the latest senatorial candidate of the administration that Palace officials had announced.

A few weeks ago, Malacañang said Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and Bukidnon Rep. Miguel Zubiri—staunch supporters of the President—were in the slate.

The President last week openly endorsed Defensor's and Zubiri's candidacies in Bacolod.

Pichay opposed the possible entry of former opposition Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta into the administration slate.

Sotto and Oreta have joined the Nationalist People's Coalition, an ally of Ms Arroyo, sparking talk that they would be part of the administration senatorial slate.

Claudio said the administration "sufficiently explained" to Pichay the case of opposition members in the administration slate.

Claudio pointed out the case of Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, an ally of former President Joseph Estrada, who "out of conviction and out of commonality of purpose" joined the administration ticket in the 2004 senatorial race.

Pichay, who said that Ms Arroyo addressed him as "senator" at the Lakas luncheon on Monday, said he had nothing personal against Sotto or Oreta.

Political coalitions during elections are just marriages of convenience because, in the end, there will be mutual junking and betrayal among candidates in the administration and opposition tickets, according to Santiago.

Santiago was commenting on the reasons for the delay in the completion of the senatorial tickets of Team Unity and of the United Opposition.

"They're afraid that the group with whom they will affiliate will betray them. That's the real reason why these negotiations are dragging," she said.

Santiago cited her own experience when her political party, the People's Reform Party, joined the coalitions of Estrada and Ms Arroyo when she ran for senator.

"(I)t's [every] man or woman for himself/[herself]. Coalition is valid only for rhetorical purposes. There is no real coalition in a campaign. It's every man to himself. They never campaigned for the entire ticket. I was very amazed," she said.

President Noli de Castro during the listing rites of orp. and the bell ringing at the Philippine Exchange
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Both initiatives, which sought to pave the way for a shift to a parliamentary form of government, were supported by Malacañang.

The Senate also challenged before the Supreme Court Ms Arroyo's Executive Order No. 464, which prevented officials from appearing in congressional inquiries without the President's permission, and other proclamations which were seen as a threat to people's rights.

Infomercials

A housing magnate with a classic rags-to-riches story, Villar made a successful Senate bid in 2001 with his campaign slogan "Mr. Sipag at Tiyaga."

But Villar said he would not declare himself a senatorial candidate until the deadline on Monday.

Like other early birds, who appear in television ads couched as infomercials, Villar stars in "Mahalin Mo 'Ko" that advocates love and respect for women.

Until the campaign period for aspiring senators begins on Feb. 13, it is illegal for them to advertise their candidacy. *With a report from Cynthia D. Balana*

vote to suspend Cayetano

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hen taunted Golez: "*Loko*
You are crazy!)"
naman kita niloloko (I am
oling you)," Golez shot

fuerte and Nueva Ecija

Rep. Rodolfo Antonino said that the discrepancies were to be expected since the bank issued several sets of original documents.

"But they are one and the same," said Villafuerte.

Before things got out of hand, Domogan changed his earlier decision to have the photocopies marked as evidence, and instead ordered that the originals should be the ones admitted by the committee.

Waiver a hoax

But soon after he banged the gavel, the committee was plunged into chaos again when Cayetano insisted that the waiver signed by the First Gentleman was not only "limited" but was a hoax because it did not cover all the accounts or transactions of the First Family here and abroad.

"It should be in the report that the First Gentleman was lying and he deserves to say sorry to the Filipino people," said Cayetano, eliciting jeers, taunts and boos from the majority-dominated committee.

Domogan reminded Cayetano that Mr. Arroyo had explicitly asked him to go with the team to Munich, but the opposition lawmaker had declined the offer, thus effectively waiving his right to personally talk with bank officials.

Irked by Cayetano's insistence on a universal waiver, Marcoleta said that although he was still dizzy from the long haul flight from Europe, he told Cayetano that the report was not for the exclusive consumption of Cayetano but "for the consumption of all of us."

"I'm hurt by what he's saying," said Marcoleta who provided comic relief when he suddenly brought out a bundle of red roses.

Red roses

He said the roses which he handed to Cayetano showed that the latter was not being given to the First Gentleman as a "gift."

"This is my gift to you," he said.

Cayetano, who represents the lone district of Taguig-Pateros, returned the gesture by handing Marcoleta three pieces of *balut* (duck eggs).

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OPINION

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Empty boasts

EDITORIAL

BRIG. GEN. BENJAMIN DOLORFINO SAYS THE "invitation" was phrased in this way: "We invite you to have an extended workshop here." With 1,000 armed men around them, how could Dolorifno decline such an invitation from MNLF leader Ustadz Habier Malik? As Dolorfino himself put it, "You have no choice but cooperate because it's their lair." He said the main purpose of the gathering was an exchange of firearms: four firearms were returned to the government, including a sniper rifle the AFP wanted back in particular. In exchange, two long firearms taken from MNLF fighters were handed back.

Much press attention has focused on a roasted calf served by the MNLF to the government contingent—reimbursed, Dolorfino says, by the Armed Forces of the Philippines to the tune of P20,000. Some reports say P450,000 was handed over as "goodwill money," a euphemism for ransom. Other accounts insist there was no ransom, only "assistance" for the families of slain MNLF fighters.

Presidential Adviser Jesus Dureza tried to be diplomatic and culturally sensitive about it: the whole incident revolved around "an indigenous way of settling" matters which is "very sensitive to discuss," though he did add, "I told Malik you should realize this is something that will have a great effect on confidence level or trust." What may be par for the course for those in the field has triggered bloodthirsty accusations of banditry and kidnapping elsewhere.

The Sulu incident may indeed be a kind of mini clash of civilizations, but it is also about the perils of officials believing their own rhetoric.

In the 1970s, the AFP fought a bloody and brutal war that generally resulted in military victories for the Philippine government. But the fighting culminated in a political settlement. The Tripoli Agreement arrived at between President Ferdinand Marcos and the MNLF remains to this day the linchpin of relations between the national government and Moro fighters. It was the cornerstone of later agreements arrived at during the Ramos administration. The introduction of foreign observers has helped to keep an uneasy, brittle peace, but peace nonetheless between the majority of Moro fighters and the government.

But there will be no permanent peace until the fundamental contradiction between Philippine commitments in the Tripoli Agreement and what the Philippine Constitution contains are resolved. The country remains a unitary one, which only grants autonomy on the basis of referenda, something many Moro leaders are ambivalent about.

Furthermore, there remains the question of a legal system based on Islamic religious law and its compatibility with a republic that is, officially, anyway, secular. The Tripoli Agreement predates our present Constitution, but talks between Moros and government leaders have evolved to proposing, if not yet officially accepting, a kind of commonwealth status for Moro areas.

A fundamental lack of trust between both sides, as Dureza pointed out, is what weakens peace efforts. That lack of trust has been only partially resolved by foreign intervention in the form of observers. But could the Philippines accept additional foreign intervention, by way of a treaty allowing other nations to be guarantors of a commonwealth status for Moro areas?

In the meantime, though, the policy of all-out war has President Macapagal-Arroyo reveling in her latest incarnation as Supreme Warlord of the Philippines. She has missed no opportunity to brag to the world—and to America, in particular—that success after splendid success has been achieved in hunting down the Abu Sayyaf.

No one denies the Abu Sayyaf is on the run, and rightly so. However, the fighting is leading to collateral damage and as long as military operations take place, the areas affected will be uneasy and always on the brink of open revolt.

Which only increases the room for opportunistic acts of extortion, which the Jolo incident basically was. The government became a victim of its own propaganda. It was prematurely proclaiming victory, while glossing over the many other unresolved fights it has on its hands. It says it is increasingly in charge—only to be shown to be incapable of extending the law outside its own military reservations.

And yet, the military leadership itself has said that development is the only surefire way of achieving victory. It is a weak civilian leadership, in the end, that confuses a press release with an enduring achievement.

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St. Valentine also patron saint of flower farmers

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

NEVER MIND IF HECTARES AND HECTARES of vegetables in Benguet have been destroyed by frost. Next week, Benguet farmers will hit the jackpot from the sale of their cutflowers. At least twice a year, the flower farmers hit the jackpot: on Valentine's Day, which is the day for lovers; and then ironically on the day of the dead, All Saints' Day.

I think among the most enjoyable means of livelihood is the raising of flowers. Of course, the work is backbreaking: hoeing the garden, planting the seeds, applying fertilizer, watering the plants twice a day, weeding rows and rows of plants and protecting them from parasites. But once the plants begin to bear flowers, they are a joy to behold, with hundreds and hundreds of flowers in a rainbow of colors nodding in the wind as if inviting the gardeners, "Take me. Take me."

And when you walk among the flowers, the perfume is just overwhelming. The best and most expensive perfume in the world cannot replace that feeling.

Harvesting and selling the flowers are even better. Then you get the money you worked so hard to earn for several months. And when you see lovers exchanging your flowers, or even just the girl holding your bouquet given to her by her lover or, years later, a solitary red rose pressed between the pages of a book, doesn't your heart swell with pride and happiness?

Once a friend took me to the sampaguita gardens in Sta. Rosa, Laguna. This is where most of the sampaguita garlands sold in Metro Manila come from. The land surrounding the houses are all planted to sampaguita bushes and their scent perfume the air. The green waxy leaves are dotted with white flowers. And over the flowers are bent women and children.

The flowers are picked while still unopened. The flowers have no opportunity to open, for when they are open, they are of little use to the gardeners. There is little chance of seeing the white star-shaped flower in full bloom.

In the houses and under the shade of trees, groups of women and children huddle around baskets and cans of sampaguita flowers. With needles and abaca fiber, they string the flowers into garlands. A merchant supplies them with ilang-ilang blossoms from some other town for the pendants.

Those barrios in Sta. Rosa must be happy barrios. All the household members, including small children, can be employed without leaving their houses. And the work is very pleasant. Women gossip while stringing the garlands. Or listen to the soap operas on the radio. The wives can work while watching their children play. They stop work only when it is time to cook lunch or dinner. After lunch, it's back to the sampaguitas.

Buyers go to the barrios in the afternoon to buy the garlands wholesale. They then take them to Metro Manila and resell them to retailers. The retailers have groups of children or women or old people to sell the garlands—the people who knock on your car window to offer their flowers. They either get a commission from their sale or buy the garlands at a discount. That is why you see children out in the streets late at night hawking what remains of their wares. If they are not able to sell them all, they would have no profit for the day or, worse, end the day with a loss.

So next time a child taps at your car window with a handful of garlands, don't hesitate to buy them all and bring them home to your wife or lover. You will not only make a woman very happy, you will also make a child happy and your own heart happy.

Back in my childhood home in Malabon, we used to have a sampaguita patch on one side of the spacious compound. My mother and sister, as well as a number of aunts and cousins, liked to raise flowers, and our place was full of flowers of all kinds, shapes and colors. That does not count the blossoms from the fruit trees all over and from the *kakawati* trees around our island that burst with profuse pink blossoms every September to rival the famous cherry blossoms of Japan.

My cousins picked the sampaguita flowers and made them into garlands. They used the fragrant flowers of the *camia* or the star-shaped flower of a bush appropriately called "Estrella" as pendants. I was always picked to sell the garlands in the neighborhood. Our garlands were longer, had bigger and more sampaguitas, but the buyers always wanted to make *tawad*. How I hated them during those times.

My elder brother had his patch of garden, but planted vegetables, not flowers. He hoed several raised garden beds and planted *pechay*, radish, mustard and lettuce. And of course, we always had vines of *upo* and *patola* climbing on bamboo trellises. *Bataw, sigadillas* and *patane* climbed over any bush or tree that was handy. *Sitaw* was planted along the fishpond dikes climbing on *kakawati* sticks. A clutch of free-roaming chickens and three ducks supplied us with eggs and meat. A nanny goat with two kids supplied us with milk. And we always had a piglet or two being fattened for special occasions.

So we were quite self-sufficient when it came to viands. My mother bought rice and salt by the sack, as well as sugar, soap and other needs by the bulk from a trader who delivered them to us in a truck.

Our home was green with vegetables and colorful with flowers. But if I had a choice, I would still like to plant only flowers and sell them.

Again, terror

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

RICARDO BLANCAFLOR, DIRECTOR FOR LEgal, public information and advocacy of the Anti-Terrorism Task Force, writes to try to dispel my terror over the current antiterror bill they are proposing in Congress. Let me take up his points one by one:

"The threat of terrorism is real and ever present. It is not a concoction of the imagination or wild speculation. It's real, it's everywhere, with the public exposed to imminent danger unless we put terrorists in check, disrupt their plans and arrest and prosecute them before they can kill the innocent and wreak havoc on our security and economy."

I agree absolutely, taking only minor exception to the word "threat." Terrorism is not just a threat in this country, it is a reality. It is everywhere, it is in the very heart of Malacañang. It exists in the horrendous, if puny, form of a president who spoke to Garci about forcibly winning a million votes over her nearest rival and kidnapping a public school teacher who witnessed the cheating. Can anything be more terroristic than that conversation between GMA and Garci? The Abu Sayyaf only beheads victims, the current non-elected government has beheaded democracy, democracy's (fountain)head being the vote.

We're not just in imminent danger from terrorists, we're being massacred even as we speak. Count the number of political activists and provincial journalists murdered in this country. Truly, we must check this vicious terrorism. That is not done by the antiterror bill, that is done by People Power.

"Terrorism is an extraordinary crime that necessitates extraordinary remedies in today's extraordinary times. The Super Ferry and Valentine's Day bombings could have been avoided had we had an antiterrorism law that could've kept the suspects behind bars."

Not at all. Terrorism is an extraordinary crime that necessitates only the very ordinary remedy of common sense. If you hear a public official in a surveillance tape asking a shady character to plant a bomb in a schoolhouse or church, would you go on to appoint that public official as the head of national security on the ground that the taped conversation was illegally gotten and everyone has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty? Certainly not. If you can't jail the fellow and throw away the key, you can at least put him under preventive suspension and keep him under a watchful eye. Well, we heard a president ask a shady character to plant a bomb in the very foundations of democracy, and not only did we not put her under suspension or behind bars—or freeze her bank deposits, as the antiterror bill proposes—we made her president of this country. No, you do not need extraordinary remedies for extraordinary crimes, you need only plain, simple, ordinary common sense.

Just as well, the most ordinary exercise of law enforcement and due process should do the trick. What idiocy that if we had an antiterror bill, we could have kept the suspects that wreaked the Super Ferry and Valentine's Day massacre behind bars. If we had law-enforcers that simply did their jobs and given the courts the evidence to convict the suspects, they would have been behind bars. You cannot replace stupidity and incompetence with force. That is rewarding the undeserving. No, more than that, that is putting a gun to your head.

In fact Blancaflor's reasoning is an old, and discredited, one which has been resorted to again and again by the police. Each time crime riots because they are busy extorting *tong* from businesses, if not kidnapping the Chinese, they ask for more guns and more powers to deal with the "emergency." And when the "emergency" gets worse because the added guns and powers merely help them extort more from businesses, if not kidnap more Chinese, they ask for still more guns and powers. *Ad absurdum,* ad nauseam.

We have all the laws we need to stop crime and terrorism. It's just a question of using them rightly. All the antiterrorism bill does is jack up terror.

"The proposed antiterrorism law is our government's response to the challenge of trying to win the war on terror without losing our democratic values and ideals...."

Too late. A ruler who rules without a mandate, who excuses the violence done to the voters as a lapse in judgment, who prevents witnesses to the cheating from testifying without her consent, who has outlawed the very thing that brought her to power, which is people power, who has made lying, cheating and stealing supreme virtues apart from national policies, and who is killing journalists and activists right and left, is in no position to defend democracy. There ain't any left.

"Our civil rights are not absolute. Such rights depend upon the survival of the government..."

False. Such rights depend upon the survival of the nation or republic or state or citizenry. Government is not any of those, least of all this one. GMA's survival is not the survival of the nation, republic, state, citizenry, democracy or even government. GMA's survival is merely her own.

"It is only the terrorists who should be afraid of the proposed antiterror law."

Hahahahahaha! Tell that to the kin of the dead.

"The most dreadful terror, however, is the possibility of being consumed by our own biases and paranoia—which see everything this administration does as always linked to political expediency and the quelling of legitimate political dissent."

Paranoia is not just seeing what is not there, it is not seeing what is there. I have a better idea for Blancaflor to contemplate. It comes from Upton Sinclair and is quoted by Al Gore in "An Inconvenient Truth." All he needs do is substitute "seeing" for "understanding."

"It is difficult to get a man to understand something when his salary depends upon his not understanding it."

Scorched Earth's impact closer to home

(*Concluded from Monday*)

THE UNITED NATIONS REPORT ON RISING global warming has spurred urgent calls from UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon as well as in New York, Europe, Africa and Asia, for a "massive" concerted global action to drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions to save the planet from the catastrophic effects of climate change.

The threat of global warming to the Philippines, though not specifically singled out by the report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, is underscored by the warnings issued from New York, Paris, Kenya, Jakarta and Hanoi.

Of direct consequence to the Philippines are the reports from Jakarta and Hanoi on the imminent threat they face from climate change. The Philippines lies in the same geographical zone as Indonesia and Vietnam, endangered by rising sea levels, stronger tropical storms, torrential rains and more severe droughts as a result of global warming. They are the mirror image of the environmental disaster likely to hit the Philippines.

The UN secretary general warned, in a message read at the start of a gathering of African nations in Nairobi, Kenya: "The degradation of the global environment continues unabated ... and the effects of climate change are being felt across the globe. But it is the poor, in Africa and small developing countries elsewhere, who will suffer the most, even though they are the least responsible for global warming."

The day after the release of the UN report, French President Jacques Chirac issued a "call of action" at a two-day conference at the Elysée Palace, urging the creation of a more powerful UN environment agency to control greenhouse emissions. "We must realize we have reached a point of no return and have caused irreparable damage," he said. "We are coming to realize that the entire planet is at risk, that the well-being, health, safety and very survival of humankind hang in the balance. It is our responsibility. The future of humanity demands it."

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

Delegates from 40 nations, mainly Europeans, signed Chirac's communiqué. Conspicuously absent were the United States and the world's heaviest polluters: Australia, Russia, China and India. Without naming the United States, which produces a quarter of the world's greenhouse gases, Chirac said, "Some large, rich countries still must be convinced," as they were still "refusing to accept the consequence of their acts."

The United States has never ratified the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, laying down targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions. Although President George W. Bush acknowledged in his last State of the Union Address that climate change was a "serious problem," he reiterated last Friday the US rejection of the cuts on emissions imposed by the protocol.

A senior official of the United Kingdom's Department for International Development, Mark Lowcock, has said Vietnam could be among the countries to be worst hit by climate change and rising sea levels. "Vietnam potentially is one of the countries where sea level rises could have the most dramatic impact," Lowcock said. While the IPCC report predicted dire consequences for low-lying tropical countries, Vietnam would also be badly hit, and "nearly a quarter of (its) population could be directly affected."

Vietnam, with a population of 84 million, is nearly the same as the Philippines in size. It was hit by 10 typhoons and severe storms last year (roughly the same number that batters the Philippines annually) concentrated on the low-lying Mekong delta, the country's rice basket.

Vietnam has 3,200 kilometers of coastline, a British government's scientific paper on climate change, has pointed out. If sea levels rose by one meter, it would lose more than 12 percent of its land, home to 23 percent of its people.

Rising sea levels could inundate about 2,000 Indonesian islands by 2030, and rice shortages are expected next year due to wild weather blamed on climate change, according to Rachmat Witoelar, Indonesia's environment minister. "It's very, very serious," he said. Indonesia has 18,000 islands, compared with the Philippines' around 7,000 islands.

In Jakarta, Yvo de Boer, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, said global warming was having an increasing impact around the world, but the developing countries are the worst hit and the least capable of defending themselves.

Michel Jarraud, secretary general of the UN World Meteorological Organization said, "The speed with which melting ice sheets are rising is uncertain, but the IPCC report makes clear that sea levels will rise inexorably over the coming centuries. It is a question of when and how much, and not if."

Susan Solomon, co-leader of the team which wrote the summary, said that vulnerabilities were much dependent on where you are. "If you're living in parts of tropics and they're getting drier and you're a farmer, there are some acute issues associated with even small changes in rainfall—changes we're already seeing are significant."

A sordid episode marred the release of the report. The day before the Guardian newspaper of London reported on it, the right-wing US think tank, American Enterprise Institute, offered $10,000 to scientists and economists who would dispute its findings. According to the Guardian, AEI, which receives funding from the oil giant ExxonMobil, sent letters to scientists in the United States, United Kingdom and elsewhere offering payments, for articles emphasizing the shortcoming of the UN report. There seemed to be no takers.

Theirs to lose

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

I HAVE TO HAND IT TO PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo—or her political handlers. At the opening of the political season, all indications were that this year's elections were for the opposition's to lose. Public opinion polls showed that incumbent senators and political figures identified with the "opposition" were leading in terms of both awareness and popularity. The only "pro-Gloria" personality who made it to the list of "senatoriables," and way below the top 12 at that, was Presidential Chief of Staff Mike Defensor. The only task left for opposition leaders, it seemed, was to choose who among the many members of the "moist eyes" club would be named to the consolidated Senate slate.

And here problems began cropping up. The main problem was that it was difficult to tell exactly who the "opposition" was, and what "opposition" stood for. Was it being anti-Gloria, anti-Cha-cha? Then the list would include many erstwhile supporters of the President who in the pre-Garci past may have helped, supported and even defended her.

Or does standing with the "opposition" mean joining the camp of former President Joseph Estrada? In that case, while many of his former Cabinet members and political supporters have remained staunchly by his side, many others have joined the administration coalition.

In other words, the "opposition" these days resembles nothing more than a rowdy conglomeration of personalities united by a rather flimsy ideology—anti-Gloria, anti-Cha-cha, but pro-what?

* * *

AND that is why the President and her political operators deserve the heartiest congratulations. From what looked like sure defeat just a few weeks ago, they seem to see the soft glimmer of victory over the horizon, thanks to the opposition's current state of disarray.

Suddenly, what seemed like a clear-cut division of loyalties and beliefs has turned into a blurry boundary. Suddenly, politicians are mouthing terms like "survival," "expedience," "convenience," where before their rhetoric was full of high-sounding words like "principles," "loyalty," "conscience" and even "the truth."

Who would have thought just a few weeks ago that the original "dancing queen" Tessie Aquino-Oreta, whose joyful jig on the Senate floor is said to have triggered Edsa Dos and led to the early assumption of power by La Gloria, would leave Erap's side and join the Nationalist People's Coalition, bringing her a few inches closer to the Arroyo camp?

Who would have thought just a few weeks ago that Richard Gomez, his star rapidly fading, would even be considered for the senatorial slate of the administration coalition? Not only had Gomez's political forays met with outstanding failure, he had been a fixture in Erap's campaign, was seen constantly in the company of the Erap-FPJ forces, and had even let loose with spicy mouthfuls against the Arroyo administration. And now, in the latest installment of his search for political viability, he has even scaled up his ambitions by abandoning his former friends and cozying up to the President's side in hopes of landing in the Senate slate.

Rep. Prospero Pichay, who thinks his display of craven loyalty to GMA has earned him a senatorial boost, burst into a tantrum and declared that if Gomez makes it to the administration slate, he would leave the President's side. This prompted a radio commentator to quip that "the *pechay* (native lettuce) in the market don't want to be held by a *goma* (rubber band, also Gomez's nickname)." Nobody's laughing, as far as I know.

Meantime, over at the "opposition" camp, they're having a hard time not just choosing candidates but finding an identity. What does being "opposition" mean today? And how did a sure thing end up the mess it has become?

* * *

AT SIX this evening, St. Joseph's College of Quezon City and Repertory Philippines will present "Reprise!" a repeat performance from selected musicals, as a tribute to St. Joseph alumna and Rep founder Zeneida "Bibot" Amador.

The performance, to be held at the Mater Dei Auditorium, St. Joseph's College compound, 295 E. Rodriguez Sr. Blvd., New Manila, is part of the year-long celebration of St. Joseph's 75th foundation anniversary.

Amador was a member of the SJC High School Batch '49, and she had performed and directed both one-act plays and full-length production in the college since 1954. In fact, Repertory Philippines was born in St. Joseph's in 1967, and since then, the company has spawned other theater companies founded by actors and theater workers trained by Bibot herself.

Rep also provided seven of the original cast members of the musical "Miss Saigon," including the two original leads—Lea Salonga and Monique Wilson—who both started as child actors under Bibot's tutelage.

For "Reprise!" Repertory Philippines will bring to life timeless classics, medleys from "Miss Saigon," "Les Misérables," "Camelot," "Fiddler on the Roof," as well as pop tunes and all-time Filipino favorites.

Directed by Carmen "Baby" Barredo, "Reprise!" features Liesl Batucan, Cathy Azanza, Karla Gutierrez, Menchu Lauchengco-Yulo, Rem Zamora, Michael Williams, JM Rodriguez and Jeremy Aguado.

* * *

NEXT Saturday, Feb. 17, Alaminos 100, an association of men and women who hail from Alaminos, Pangasinan, their families and friends, will be holding "Luv2Dance!" a "retro-ballroom dance party" at 8 p.m. at the UP Bahay ng Alumni.

The dance party marks the second founding anniversary of Alaminos 100, which is devoted not just to fostering fellowship among Alaminians residing in Manila and abroad, but also to raising funds for projects to benefit the old hometown, now a city.

For tickets and information, you can get in touch with Dina Braganza-Dayrit at 0927-3759399 or Susan Sison-de Leon at 0920-9287554.

Historical agencies

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

IF PROOF IS NEEDED OF FILIPINO CREATIVITY, one simply has to take the Edsa-Ayala or the Edsa-Kalayaan flyovers and take note of the missing steel railings. Surely, these safety railings were not stolen for souvenirs. They could not be used in homes and they were probably melted for scrap metal. I marvel that something fixed to the ground can be stolen so easily. It requires special technical knowledge and equipment to remove these from the flyover, and, of course, a waiting vehicle to cart away the loot. How is this done without anyone noticing? Now, that is magic comparable to Houdini's.

Another favorite of steel collectors happen to be those heavy metal manhole covers that also disappear, posing hazards to cars and pedestrians especially during the rainy season. While manholes are more appealing in design than steel railings, I think they also end up as scrap metal.

When I think of all this, I wonder why the heavy bronze historical markers that dot many places in the country are still in place. Perhaps these impressive markers, painted black and with raised letters, remind people of tombstones. Maybe the seal of the Republic that crowns the marker commands respect.

These markers remind us where historic events have happened or where historical persons were born or died. Over the years I have seen and read texts on these markers and noted that they were installed by either the Philippines Historical Committee or the National Historical Institute.

The present National Historical Institute (NHI), to which I often refer in jest as the National Hysterical, was established in 1972 as part of the government reorganization resulting from Ferdinand Marcos declaring martial law and ruling by decree from Malacañang. The change from Commission to Institute gave the agency an academic rather than official character and emphasized its research and educational role. The NHI integrated all the functions, personnel and property of various post-war commissions set up to commemorate the birth centennials of heroes of the late 19th century such as Rizal, Bonifacio, Mabini, Luna, Burgos, etc.

Aside from reminding Filipinos about the deeds of our great men in history, the NHI was also given the responsibility for the preservation of historical sites, monuments and landmarks, which explains why the agency is often in the eye of controversy regarding heritage protection.

Interestingly, the present NHI traces its roots to the Philippine Historical Research and Markers Committee, created in 1933 by US Governor General Frank Murphy through Executive Order 451 and whose main task was to identify and mark "historic antiquities" in the capital, Manila, and later throughout the Philippines as a first step in their preservation. The NHI preserves a small notebook with the handwritten minutes of meetings and from this manuscript, we get the names of the committee members: Walter Robb, an American journalist interested in the history of Manila as chair; the pioneering pre-historian of the Philippines H. Otley Beyer, who also dabbled in history, the Spanish Fr. Miguel Selga, S.J. who is better known for his work in the Manila Observatory, and a certain Dean Edward Hyde of whom we know next to nothing. The Filipino members of the committee had names recognizable to anyone doing Filipiniana research: Jaime C. de Veyra, Conrado Benitez and Eulogio B. Rodriguez.

Going through the names and their discussions, I realized this was worth closer scrutiny. What guided them in their choices? What places did they consider "historical"? Did the Filipinos and foreigners agree on their choices?

When the Philippine Commonwealth was established in 1935, the PHRMC was replaced by the Philippines Historical Committee. The latter had basically the same functions as the former, but it had the additional responsibility of acquiring antiquities owned by private individuals and repairing government owned antiquities. Unfortunately, the documentation on the committee is scanty.

Similarly lost to history is the work of the committee during the Japanese occupation, when it was placed under the Commission of Education, Health and Public Welfare (whatever that means). Obviously, people were more occupied with survival to think of history during the war, so six months after independence and the inauguration of the Third Philippine Republic, on Jan. 20, 1947, the Philippines Historical Committee was reconstituted and placed first under the Office of the President and later transferred to the Department of Education.

The PHC was very active when the country was rebuilding from the ashes of the war. It was a time not just for physical reconstruction but also the reconstruction of the past to form nationhood. Over 400 markers were installed all over the archipelago by the PHC, and it acquired places and relics of heroes such as the present Mabini Shrines in Tanauan, Batangas and Nagtahan, Manila; the ruins of Juan Luna's birthplace in Badoc, Ilocos Norte.

The PHC also caused the construction of a replica of the Rizal home in Calamba and collected about 600 items of rare Rizaliana now stored at the National Library. Did this result in Rizal becoming the prime national hero?

(Conclusion on Friday)

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Medicine-wise

"CAN I USE MY SENIOR'S DISCOUNT CARD?" ASKED THE woman in front of me in the line, as she was about to pay for the medicines she had just bought.

"Only if it's accompanied by a prescription," tersely answered the woman at the cash register.

I could tell the woman was hard up, as she groped through her purse to bring out mostly coins to pay. But my pity gave way to horror when I saw what she was purchasing: one tablet of Trexil and one tablet of Cefalin.

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

Both are antibiotics and there is no way you can effectively treat any ailment with one tablet of each of the antibiotics. I could only hope the woman was, like many Filipinos, buying medicines *tingi* (in small amounts), and that she'd eventually be able to take enough of a correct dose to have some effect on whatever ailment she had. But, for the life of me, I couldn't think of what ailment you would treat with the combination of medicines she had bought. (For those with medical background, Trexil is one of the brand names for amoxicillin while Cefalin is a brand name for cephalexin.)

How expensive?

We have the *tingi* buying system because of the high costs of medicines. I've lost count of the times when I've seen people in drugstores reducing the number of tablets they need, or opting not to buy any at all simply because they didn't have enough money.

Filipinos have suffered too long from these high costs. The government and NGOs respond from time to time, trying to find ways to reduce the costs. The Generics Act of 1988 was one such attempt. In recent years, the government has tried parallel imports, bringing cheaper versions of brand name drugs from their subsidiaries in other countries. And recently, a bill was proposed in Congress to work for cheaper imports. The INQUIRER carried a full-page ad the other day from NGOs, like the Coalition for Services to the Elderly (COSE), calling on Congress to pass the bill.

It's unlikely Congress will, given the politicians' attention is now focused on the May elections. Besides, I wonder if importation alone will solve the problems. We just haven't given enough attention to developing a stronger local drug industry to help make drugs more affordable.

The United group of companies has helped to some extent, with generic lines like Rite-Med. They've also come up with lower-costing brand name versions that put up some competition with the multinationals' products, as we saw recently in the battles with a heart medicine.

But even the lower-cost versions are still expensive, relative to what Filipinos can afford and to what the same medicines cost overseas. About two years ago, I wrote about my own experiences with propranolol, a drug for hypertension. I was buying 40 mg of Inderal in the Philippines at P12 each, but in Bangkok, I found I could get another brand name version for P3 each.

The cost of Inderal is now P14 each in the Philippines, but the cost of the brand name version in Bangkok has remained the same. Not only that, during a recent trip to Vietnam, I found a generic version that cost far less. Not P2, not P1, but 85 centavos each.

Market intelligence

The multinationals scare people by saying cheap drugs are probably fake drugs. But many of the cheaper versions of medicines, including the ones being brought in by the government through parallel importation, are produced by the same multinational companies. And the low-cost drugs I found in Vietnam come from Apotek, a respected Canadian generic drugs manufacturer.

Filipinos are taking action on their own with "market intelligence," figuring out where to get good medicines at low cost. I have friends, physicians and nurses, who buy their medicines abroad, whenever they attend conferences and workshops, some even having developed *suki* (special client) relationships with reliable drugstores. Similarly, people living with HIV/AIDS learned, years ago, to bring in cheaper medicines from Thailand and India, with the help of international NGOs.

But what happens to the millions of Filipinos who don't travel abroad, or don't have networks for accessing low-cost medicines?

Learn to use the law. The Generics Act requires drugstores to carry price lists to help customers choose from different brand and generic names and I've seen many pharmacists and drugstore clerks helping customers with choices.

I'll give one more personal experience here to make my point. It's that time of the year when many Filipinos have allergy problems. I use cetirizine and for many years had only one expensive choice: Zyrtec. Now that cetirizine is off-patent, there are a few alternatives but you won't know unless you ask. The larger drugstores are too busy to give you choices, but if you go to a smaller one, like I did, the clerk will give you several choices: Zyrtec at P39.65 each (with a buy 6, get 1 free offer for P217.70), Virlix at 39.65, and Alnix at P25.30. At another drugstore the clerk gave me a choice between Zyrtec, Alnix and Histamed, the last one costing P25 each but they were out of stock.

It may be more time-consuming, but it pays to be medicines-wise. And that might include not taking a medicine unless you really need it. Cetirizine causes drowsiness and I have to finish this article so I'm bearing with the itching before I take my Alnix—while regretting I didn't buy my cetirizine in Thailand, where it costs about P3 each.

Karma

I'd like to go back to the woman I mentioned at the beginning of my article. The woman's purchase was only one example of what happens when the costs of medicines are beyond the reach of people. And frankly, I don't know what's worse, not being able to buy the medicine at all, or buying an inadequate amount.

The adverse impact isn't just on the indigent patient. This *tingi* use of antibiotics is just unacceptable and will, in the long run, affect other people as well in the form of antibiotic resistance in the general population. It's already happened with many other infectious diseases. For example, we have one of the highest rates of resistance to anti-tuberculosis medicines in the world, mainly because there was so much self-medicating with the medicines, and the use of incorrect doses. People were also stopping treatment even before the infection had come under control. The cost factor was always there, behind what doctors call non-compliance.

There are also super-strains of gonorrhea resistant to several antibiotics, again because Filipino men were taking antibiotics for "prevention." (For the readers' general information, taking antibiotics does not prevent gonorrhea, or any other sexually transmitted diseases. Only condoms have been proven effective.)

I don't know, but the problems we have with antibiotic resistance may be a kind of karma, the result of our not doing enough, as consumers, as government regulatory officers, as educators, to help people get those low-cost, good-quality medicines and to use them wisely.

Iskolar ng Bayan musn't be like politicians: freeloaders

THIS IS IN REFERENCE TO Michael Tan's column, "Fairness and UP" (INQUIRER, 1/24/07) May I suggest the following ideas for the UP Board of Regents to consider:

1. Any student who stays in UP longer than the normal duration of the course they are taking (i.e., four years for most undergraduate courses and five years for Engineering and BS BAA) should pay the full tuition regardless of the STFAP bracket they belong to, plus a penalty per semester in excess of the course's normal duration; except if the student takes a leave of absence to represent the university (e.g., UP Madrigal Singers, UPCC, UPSA, UP Dance Troupe and other similar groups) in a duly accredited endeavor. The logic is simple: the State should not pay one peso more (vis-à-vis tuition support) than it needs to, and it should discourage tardiness.

2. As an extension of idea No. 1, repeat subjects should be assessed the full tuition regardless of the student's STFAP bracket. Otherwise, someone else more deserving, would be deprived of that second subsidy.

3. UP should integrate in its curriculum—ideally in the last semester—a practicum program wherein each student should render full time OJT service in any government-owned or -operated institution. This should expose the students to actual government work and assure the State of ROI for subsidizing the Iskolar ng Bayan tuition. Both the government and the student would greatly benefit from this activity.

In the end, we should realize that every peso spent to educate the few selected Iskolar ng Bayan is a peso less for other social services.

In economics, subsidy should be developmental in nature and should never be perpetual. While it is our right to have access to good education (I am an Iskolar ng Bayan myself), we should not insist on the right to be freeloaders. Otherwise, we would be no better than our current politicians. As the song goes, "Let there be peace on Earth, and let it begin with me."

—BON MOYA,
bonmoya@gmail.com

ACTIVISTS raising what to them is a life-and-death issue for poor Filipinos INQUIRER PHOTO

Atong Ang's admission useless

INQUIRER'S JAN. 27 ANTI-ERAP editorial was less than fair.

In June 1998, President Joseph Estrada told Atong Ang in Polk not to see him again there or anywhere else. "*Nagtampo*," and that was what happened exactly. That was what President Erap said under oath in the Sandiganbayan last year. That was what Ang repeatedly said in the Senate in October 2000.

The latest tune from the prosecution is that it never said that the P130 million was delivered on one occasion since the one-time delivery tale blew up in its face during the ocular inspection-reenactment. It did not happen.

Gov. Chavit Singson's troubles with the tobacco excise funds go back all the way to the time of President Fidel Ramos. Lawyer Agustin Chan of the Commission on Audit kept at the issue and got murdered. Singson kept asking many people to intercede with Erap to call off the COA watchdog. Erap kept pointing out that the COA is an independent constitutional body.

The confession of Ang says he conspired with Erap and includes the admission of all the charges against Erap all the way to the Jose Velarde account and Belle Resources. For one who did not meet or talk with Erap during his tenure as president to know so much exposes the falsified imposition that the breath-taking confession is. The prosecution crows that the fabrication strengthens its case against Erap but the presidential legal counsel, Sergio Apostol, says it only affects Ang.

Luckily, the prosecution did not include all unsolved crimes. But, it would not even give President Estrada's lawyer, Jay Flaminiano, a copy of the useless, defect-ridden agreement worked out by the Office of the Ombudsman, Office of the Special Prosecutor and the Department of Justice. Useless because it overlooked that Ang had not asked for a separate trial. He also pleaded guilty to the wrong offense. Our team has a right to be heard at every stage of the case. That is basic due process.

—RAV SAGUISAG

Dinampo merely quoted Janjalani

THIS HAS REFERENCE TO JAMAL Khalifa's reaction (INQUIRER, 1/27/07) to Octavio Dinampo's interview with Khadaffy Janjalani. (INQUIRER, 1/22/07)

Khalifa tried to impugn some points in Dinampo's story. Khalifa asked: "So what volunteers was Dinampo talking about?" But it was Janjalani, not Dinampo, who was talking about volunteers for the jihad against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. Dinampo merely faithfully recorded and translated what Janjalani told him during the interview.

Khalifa also cast doubt on Janjalani's claim that Khalifa and Ramzi Yousef gave the Abu Sayyaf Group P6 million. "If Janjalani were alive today, he should be around 31 years old. That means he was only 14 years old in 1989, about the time he allegedly received money from me. Or even if it was already 1992, he would still have been in his teenage years. Does this make sense?"

First of all, the "us" in Janjalani's reply ("They gave us P6 million, if I'm not mistaken") clearly refers to the Abu Sayyaf, not to him personally. At that time, there were more senior Abu Sayyaf leaders, like Janjalani's two elder brothers Abdurajak (the *amir* or leader, not emir) and Hector. In fact, Janjalani's phrase "if I'm not mistaken" could only mean that the money was not directly given to him.

Besides, Janjalani was born March 3, 1973, and so was about 16 years old in 1989, or 19 (not "in his teenage years") in 1992, and 33 if he were alive today. Anyway, 14 is considered the "age of maturity" for one to become a mujahideen.

As the editor noted, Dinampo's interview with Janjalani was done as "part of some field research undertaken by the South-South Network (SSN) for Non-State Armed Group Engagement in preparation for a coming comprehensive book on Philippine armed groups." The study is also into desk, library, office, Internet and e-mail research to put together a comprehensive, accurate and all-sided picture of "Philippine armed groups." The final write-up on the Abu Sayyaf is not yet done.

We are glad though that some of the country's leading Muslim scholars, specifically professors Taha Basman and Moner Bajunaid, have reacted constructively to Dinampo's interview with Janjalani, particularly on how the latter (Janjalani, not Dinampo) justified kidnapping by citing the Prophet Muhammad's alleged order to kidnap or seize the caravan of Abu Suffian. (PDI, 1/28/07) The title that the INQUIRER gave the interview, "Janjalani: Prophet gave order to kidnap," may have created some misimpressions about Islam. Dinampo, like Basman and Bajunaid, considers this a narrow or mistaken interpretation, but Dinampo as interviewer cannot put his own words into the mouth of his interviewee.

Basman said that he had "full confidence" that Dinampo knew "the real (Abu Suffian) story, as well." SSN, too, has full confidence in the research capability and integrity of Dinampo.

—SOLIMAN M. SANTOS JR.,
Regional Focal Point for Asia,
South-South Network (SSN)
for Non-State Armed
Group Engagement
18 Mariposa St., Cubao, QC

Santos e-mailed the above letter to the INQUIRER on Jan. 29. Two days later, before the INQUIRER could publish it, Jamal Khalifa was killed in Madagascar.—**Ed.**

Lacson: a light in darkness

I THANK GOD FOR ALEXANDER Lacson's article titled "Leaders our nation needs" which appeared in the Jan. 29 issue of the INQUIRER. He is a light in our dark world.

May God make more Filipinos like him. May more INQUIRER writers be as truthful and as diligent as he is in using God-given wisdom for the good of others.

Allow me to extend my deep appreciation to him, for his being bold and for upholding the truth of God's will for our country and our countrymen. God bless him.

—RAQUEL VIVAR,
raquelcvivar@hotmail.com

Erratum

Due to a computer glitch, the INQUIRER inadvertently published yesterday, Feb. 6, 2007, the cartoon used in its Jan. 6, 2007 issue. Our apologies.—**Ed.**

An uncouth legislator?

I WAS AT THE CEBU AIRPORT with my cousins visiting from New Zealand and we were in line for the final baggage check to get into the pre-departure area when a woman cut into the queue, ahead of the man in front of me.

The man and I both told her very politely that there was a line. And what did she do? She snapped back at us, very rudely telling us "Priority." My cousins and I looked at each other, chuckling and confused. She then turned around to face us and said, "Don't laugh at me, I'm a congresswoman. I told you I'm priority."

I answered back, "Don't snap at us."

"You're b— s—t," she retorted.

When she was asked her name, she didn't reply. We came to know later that she was indeed a congresswoman from Cebu, who has been known for acting that way.

Is this the way our elected leaders behave? Feeling superior to everybody else? We could have willingly allowed her to get ahead of us if only she had asked and explained nicely. She should have taken a cue from the President's daughter Luli Arroyo who falls in line at airports and doesn't expect to be given "priority."

A few months from now, we will again have elections. Let's all take a closer look at the politicians asking for our votes. If they cannot accord us simple courtesy, how can they be decent, effective leaders?

—ABBEY HINTO,
abbeyhinto@gmail.com

Fake drugs a law enforcement concern, not an IPC issue

THE PHARMACEUTICAL AND Healthcare Association of the Philippines (PHAP) would deny the Filipino people access to affordable medicines by opposing Senate Bill 2263. This proposed law seeks to amend the Intellectual Property Code (IPC), and thus reduce the price of medicines in the country.

In a letter to the editor (INQUIRER, 1/23/07), PHAP warned that if signed into law, the bill will open the floodgates to fake drugs. PHAP is doing its best to link the IPC amendments to its scare campaign on fake drugs. The amendments, however, will help ensure that patents do not deprive Filipino patients of access to cheaper medicines of the same quality. The proliferation of fake drugs is a law enforcement concern that has nothing to do with patents.

PHAP is acting irresponsibly by confusing the issue. Poor Filipinos are unnecessarily dying or suffering prolonged illnesses because they cannot afford medicines. It's about time that giant pharmaceutical companies put people's health over profits in this country.

The legislators should get past PHAP's claims and not succumb to pressure; both the Senate and House bills on this issue are enjoying support across party lines. We appeal to both chambers to immediately pass the pending bills. The proposed law would reduce the cost of medicines by allowing parallel importation of the cheaper generic versions of expensive, locally manufactured medicines critical to the health of poor Filipinos; and by discouraging foreign pharmaceutical companies from denying the people access to cheaper medicines.

The safeguard measures in the proposed law allow competition between generic drugs against the foreign pharmaceutical companies' patented medicines, the only proven method to reduce the price of medicines. These safeguards have been implemented in many other countries, and are permitted under the World Trade Organization's TRIPS (Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) Agreement. Under TRIPS, the Philippines is allowed to make available in the market the generic versions of patented medicines, even when a patent monopoly still exists; as well as to ensure rapid and early introduction of generic medicines upon the expiration of their patents.

There are enough indications that PHAP is doing everything in its power and influence to prevent the government from addressing the health care needs of the people. We hope that public interest will prevail in our legislators' deliberations and decisions.

Figures from the National Statistics Office showed that the total family expenditures for medical care in 2000 increased by 13.7 percent from 1997 figures. Families spend P46 for medicines out of every P100 spent for health care.

—SHALIMAR VITAN,
coordinator, Oxfam,
Access to Medicines Campaign,
95 Malumanay St.,
Teachers Village, Quezon City

TV commercial that insults womenfolk

"DEPLORABLE" IS HOW I WOULD describe a TV commercial that has been airing since last year. In the commercial, a man, using a roller brush, paints onto a wall a woman talking angrily to him. A few seconds later, the man, not contented with what he just did, gives the woman a once-over, with more paint.

How low can house paint commercials go? The advertisement imparts no value at all. On the contrary, it degrades the womenfolk. It perpetuates society's still prevalent thinking that what women have to say is not that important and can just be brushed aside or, in the case of the TV commercial, "brushed over" into oblivion.

The ad also belittles the importance of "communication" in building a more harmonious relationship between a man and a woman, especially in a family or household.

I worry about the impact of the commercial on the children's subconscious. They might get the idea that it is OK to treat women, even their own mothers, with contempt.

—CS ABIS,
zsyle@yahoo.com

Housing as an election issue

COMMENTARY

Anna Marie A. Karaos
John J. Carroll Institute on Church and Social Issues

SURELY MANY HAVE HEARD OF THE PASTORAL statement issued by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines on the forthcoming elections. The statement predictably made news even though the public mood about the elections has been largely one of pessimism and distrust. Still, people are curious whether the statement can provide a constructive perspective on what is likely to be an unexciting contest among equally undesirable parties and candidates.

Unknown to most—because it has not received much media coverage—another statement was issued by the CBCP at its recent assembly. This other statement is on the nation's housing problem. What is so compelling about the housing situation that it warranted a pastoral statement from the bishops?

The bishops are primarily concerned that many poor people in our country today are deprived of the basic human right to adequate and secure shelter. In their statement, they remind the faithful that "adequate and humane dwelling is a basic right. Our urban poor people, as human beings and children of God, have basic human rights to clean and inexpensive water, decent house, communities free of stagnant disease-ridden water and uncollected garbage." The bishops lament that "despite their (the poor people's) own efforts and those of many groups, including government and the Church, we cannot say our urban poor people enjoy these rights today."

The government's Medium Term Philippine Development Plan (MTPDP) estimates the total housing need in the country, for the period 2005-2010, to be 3.8 million. This number, which includes the housing requirements of all income groups, means roughly 20 million Filipinos nationwide are in need of some form of housing improvement. Focusing on those residing in urban areas where the conditions of blight described by the bishops are most felt, a study estimates that in Metro Manila alone, at least 900,000 poor families will be needing housing assistance and community site upgrading within the same period (2006-2011) or thereabouts.

The bishops are correct that present efforts by different actors, including the Church, civic and non-governmental groups and the government itself, have barely made a dent on the housing problem, given its magnitude and the rate at which it is increasing because of population growth and other sources of displacement, such as evictions and calamities. An assessment we did last year estimated that while the total housing need is growing by roughly 626,000 annually, the combined targeted outputs of government housing programs reach only 190,000 per year. The government, which is the biggest provider of low-income housing, can only muster an average annual output of 130,000 units of social housing assistance, judging from the MTPDP targets.

The question we might ask is: Could these targets be increased to keep pace with the rate of increase in housing demand? It is worth mentioning that these targets do not include the housing assistance provided by local governments, unless these are financed through national government programs like the Community Mortgage Program (CMP) and the resettlement programs of the National Housing Authority. Local governments, therefore, to the extent that they provide additional resources for social housing and site upgrading that benefit poor families, can make a substantial contribution to reducing the housing backlog. In fact, it is now increasingly recognized that local governments hold the key to upscaling and accelerating the delivery of housing assistance, particularly to the urban poor.

There are already some promising developments in this direction. Official development assistance in recent years has focused on helping local governments formulate city shelter plans to enable them to size up realistically the investment requirements of responding to their housing problems. The newly created Social Housing Finance Corporation, which is now administering the CMP, is presently looking into adopting a localized CMP which would give local governments a bigger capability to respond to their constituents' demand for housing and land acquisition loans. Some local governments have purchased land for their informal settler families, using their own resources and then tapping organizations like the Gawad Kalinga and Habitat for Humanity to build the houses.

For these efforts to continue and multiply, the kind of leaders that will run the local governments in our cities will matter a great deal. By issuing a pastoral statement on the country's housing problem as well as a pastoral letter on the elections in their last assembly, the bishops are reminding us that certain urgent social problems cannot be set aside because of politics and elections. In fact, the forthcoming elections, to be meaningful, have to take up our urgent social problems. The urban poor should be asking the candidates courting their votes how they plan to deal with the problem of housing. This should be even more crucial for local candidates running for mayor and seats in the council.

Interestingly, not one of the political personalities featured in the info ads on television these days has touched on the issue of urban poverty and homelessness. Not Mike Defensor, who used to be chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council; or Manny Villar, whose family business interest is in real estate and housing development. Unless the people are the ones to speak up and make their needs known, I guess politicians will never really know or remember what the most important issues are.

Nograles denies Lakas-Kampi feuding

By Michael Lim Ubac
and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

DESPITE INTERNAL BICKERING, THE ADministration coalition is strong, officials said yesterday.

House Majority Leader Prospero Nograles dismissed as "baseless and erroneous" a report that there was infighting between members of Lakas-CMD and Kampi who were running for the same post in the local and congressional elections.

"That's just political intrigue. There is no infighting. All our parties will respect the equity of the incumbent in all areas where there are candidates coming from the rainbow coalition," he said.

Nograles was reacting to a report that President Macapagal-Arroyo had to step in to resolve the brewing struggle between Lakas-CMD and Kampi.

At a luncheon meeting with officers and members of the two parties on Monday, the President ordered the formation of an arbitration panel to resolve conflicts between coalition members running for the same post.

Turf war

Nograles acknowledged that there was a turf war among allies "because the opposition has no viable challenger in (some) areas so that whoever wins is also a PGMA (Ms Arroyo) supporter."

The areas subject to arbitration are the towns, districts and provinces where the incumbents' terms are expiring, according to the House majority leader.

"We have to decide who will take over. But that's only 30 percent (of the country). Most areas, (70) percent, have no political conflicts among Gloria supporters. Fact is that, in most areas, there are no serious opposition candidates, especially in the countryside," he said.

Same seats contested

Rep. Michael Duavit of Rizal, secretary general of the pro-administration wing of the Nationalist People's Coalition, earlier said that in many areas, administration allies were contesting the same seats.

Gerry Salapuddin, deputy speaker for Mindanao, said the "tension" in the coalition was surfacing because each party was batting for its chosen candidates.

But he said the tension "is manageable and far from causing division in the coalition ranks."

Salapuddin said the creation of an arbitration panel was proof that the coalition was "ruled democratically and diplomatically."

"Unlike the United Opposition, the administration coalition is not breaking up and its solidarity will hold and will be one of the keys to its poll victory," he said.

Salapuddin, the Lakas chair for Basilan, said the arbitration panel would ensure that everyone's interest was given due attention so that a consensus on the list of local administration candidates could be reached as soon as possible.

"This is how we finalize the list of our candidates, amicably and democratically. Everyone's side is heard. This way, there will be no bickering or fighting," he said.

Kampi Representatives Luis Villafuerte and Rodolfo Antonino told reporters that it was natural for a large coalition to have intramurals within it.

SC rules vs doc, hospital ...

From page A1

The tribunal's ruling affirming the appellate court's decision of Sept. 6, 1996, was written by Justice Angelina Sandoval Gutierrez and issued on Jan. 31.

Ampil operated on Agana in 1984, in the course of her treatment for cancer of the sigmoid. (The sigmoid colon joins the rectum, which in turn joins the anus, or the opening where solid waste passes out of the body.)

He found that the cancer had spread to the patient's left ovary. Dr. Juan Fuentes then conducted a hysterectomy, where portions of the stricken ovary were removed.

Nurses' report

It was Ampil who completed the surgery.

According to operation records, the attending nurses called Ampil's attention to the missing gauze ("sponge count lacking 2") and a search was conducted. But despite the fruitless search, the surgeon "continued[d] for closure."

Agana subsequently experienced "excruciating pain" in her anal region. The pieces of gauze measuring 1.5 inches in width were in time found—one causing a grave infection in her vaginal vault.

Agana and her husband Enrique filed a complaint for damages before the Quezon City Regional Trial Court, which, on March 17, 1993, found PSI and the two surgeons liable. The case was later elevated to the appellate court.

But the Supreme Court cleared Fuentes of liability, saying Ampil had checked the other surgeon's work after the hysterectomy and allowed him to leave the operating room.

'Callous negligence'

In agreeing with the Quezon City RTC's invocation of the doctrine of corporate negligence in finding PSI liable, the Supreme Court said hospitals were obliged to monitor their medical staff as part of their responsibility to provide quality health care.

The tribunal also said that PSI exhibited "callous negligence" in failing to act on Agana's condition, and that it was expected to know about the procedures carried out on the patient as well as the nurses' report on the two missing pieces of gauze.

"Not only did PSI breach its duties to oversee or supervise all persons who practice medicine within its walls, it also failed to take an active step in fixing the negligence committed," the high court said.

"This renders PSI not only vicariously liable for the negligence of Dr. Ampil under Article 2180 of the Civil Code, but also directly liable for its own negligence," it said.

The high court pointed out that PSI profited financially from the actions of its doctors and, in turn, should be held liable for their mistakes as well.

Financial profit

It added that PSI had failed to prove that it had supervised Ampil with "the "diligence of a good father of a family."

The tribunal also said that an employer-employee relationship existed between PSI and Ampil, and that the hospital presented the latter as a doctor associated with it.

"Thus, in cases where it can be shown that a hospital, by its actions, has held out a particular physician as its agent and/or employee and that a patient has accepted treatment from that physician in the reasonable belief that it is being rendered in behalf of the hospital, then the hospital will be liable for the physician's negligence," the high court said.

The tribunal further said that by displaying in its lobby the names and specializations of its physicians, PSI was in effect endorsing their services:

"We concur with the Court of Appeals' conclusion that [PSI] 'is now estopped from passing all the blame to the physicians whose names it proudly paraded in the public directory leading the public to believe that it vouched for their skill and competence.'

"Indeed, PSI's act is tantamount to holding out to the public that Medical City Hospital, through its accredited physicians, offers quality health care services."

Deception

As for Ampil, the Supreme Court said he had deceived Agana by not disclosing to her the information about the missing pieces of gauze.

"To our mind, what was initially an act of negligence by Dr. Ampil has ripened into a deliberate wrongful act of deceiving his patient. This is a clear case of medical malpractice or, more appropriately, medical negligence," the tribunal said.

Both surgeons had assured Agana that the pain she was feeling even after her discharge from the hospital was a natural result of the surgery.

Agana subsequently sought treatment in the United States, where she was found to be free of cancer.

It was after her return to the Philippines later in 1984 that the pieces of gauze were found in her body.

The INQUIRER sought out Marilyn Atienza, identified by the hospital's marketing staff as the hospital's spokesperson, for comment. But she could not be reached after repeated attempts up to press time. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Orbiting junk in space ...

From page A1

the critical spatial density, the point at which a chain reaction becomes inevitable—they grew more anxious.

Early this year, after a half-century of growth, the federal list of detectable objects (4 inches wide or larger) reached 10,000, including dead satellites, spent rocket stages, a camera, a hand tool and junkyards of whirling debris left over from chance explosions and destructive tests.

Now, experts say, China's test Jan. 11 of an antisatellite rocket that shattered an old satellite into hundreds of large fragments means the chain reaction will most likely start sooner. If their predictions are right, the cascade could put billions of dollars' worth of advanced satellites at risk and eventually threaten to limit humanity's reach for the stars.

Federal and private experts say early estimates of 800 pieces of detectable debris from the shattering of the satellite will grow to nearly 1,000 as observations continue by tracking radars and space cameras. At either number, it is the worst such episode in space history.

Today, next year or next decade, some piece of whirling debris will start the cascade, experts say.

Belt of debris

In April, Beijing is to play host to the annual meeting of the advocacy group, known as the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. Donald J. Kessler, a former head of the orbital debris program at Nasa and a pioneer analyst of the space threat, said Chinese officials at the forum would probably feel "some embarrassment."

Cascade warnings began as early as 1978. Kessler and his Nasa colleague, Burton G. Cour-Palais, wrote in The Journal of Geophysical Research that speeding junk that formed more junk would produce "an exponential increase in the number of objects with time, creating a belt of debris around the Earth." *The New York Times*

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SSS #:
Office Tel / Fax No.
e-mail Address:
Send my insurance documents to my: ☐ Business Address ☐ Home Address
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Relationship to you:

1. During the past 5 years, have you consulted a physician for medical attention or surgical advice, or been confined in a hospital, sanitarium or similar institution? ☐ YES ☐ NO
2. Have you ever been told you had: cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, heart trouble, high blood pressure or tuberculosis, kidney disorder, nervous disorder or HIV-AIDS? (If YES, underline which ailment.) ☐ YES ☐ NO
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2. Has there been or will there be any change in any existing insurance in force? ☐ Yes ☐ No
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House body backs mining resumption

SORSOGON CITY—THE ENVIRONMENT COMmittee of the House of Representatives favored the lifting of the cease and desist order imposed by the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) on the mining operations of Lafayette Phils Inc. (LPI), said the head of the committee.

Rep. Leovigildo Banaag (1st District, Agusan), however, said that the committee would continue to monitor the mining operation to ensure that the company maintains its compliance with the conditions set by the PAB and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

He said the committee has an oversight function that it could use to continuously monitor LPI's operations.

Banaag told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview that the committee's decision was based on the result of the ocular inspection conducted by its members, led by Rep. Jose Solis (2nd District, Sorsogon), committee vice chair, late last year.

The Agusan legislator said that part of the committee's recommendation was the conduct of continuous test runs until Lafayette has fully complied with conditions specified by the PAB and the DENR.

Banaag's committee conducted a series of committee hearings last year following complaints from Sorsogon fishermen on the mining operations' effects on the province's sea water.

He, however, said that the committee report has yet to be approved by the House in plenary session.

Earlier, Carlos Dominguez, president and CEO of LPI, said the company has fully complied with the 36 conditions set by the DENR and PAB.

Dominguez, who was on Rapu-Rapu Island Monday to meet Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes, said the mining site was already prepared for operation since late November last year but the administration building and bunkhouses were damaged by Supertyphoon "Reming."

Environmental infrastructures, however, were spared by the typhoon, he added.

Dominguez said improvements and rehabilitation work in the mine site cost the company some $2.8 million and they were planning to further improve the facilities in anticipation of strong typhoons in the future.

Residents of Rapu-Rapu Island appealed to the government to lift the cease and desist order (CDO) against LPI after the company met the conditions of the PAB.

Residents braved heavy rains Monday morning as they waited for Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes.

Reyes, however, failed to arrive as bad weather on the island prevented the helicopter he was riding in to land due to poor visibility.

Instead, Reyes talked with reporters waiting for him at the mine site through mobile phone and said that he was sending a technical team Tuesday to evaluate Lafayette.

Reynold Asuncion, village chair of Barangay Malobago which hosts the mine site, told the INQUIRER that Rapu-Rapu residents lost their jobs due to the non-operation of the mining company.

Asuncion stressed that local residents urgently need livelihood following the devastation they suffered after Reming battered this town.

Reyes said he would await the report of the technical team and was expecting the PAB to come up with a decision on Feb. 8.

Sorsogon Gov. Raul Lee, meanwhile, said that he was maintaining his position that it should be the DENR which should decide since the issue concerns technical matters. ***Bobby Q. Labalan, Inquirer Southern Luzon***

CALL CENTER
A member of the Marine Battalion Landing Team 9 (MBLT9) checks his cell phone in the only spot where cellular phone signal is available in Barangay Bonbon, Patikul, Sulu. The MBLT9 was the unit involved in a gunfight with the Moro National Liberation Front on Jan. 18 in Timpook, Patikul. REM ZAMORA

Public warned of new scam in DA funds

DAVAO CITY—THE SUARA PARTY-list group warned about a repeat of the controversial fertilizer scam after Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said his department was asking for P3-4 billion in additional funds.

Zaynab Ampatuan, Suara deputy national secretary general, said her group has become suspicious of the real motive behind Yap's request for an additional budget especially as the May elections draw near.

Ampatuan said that shortly before the 2004 elections, the DA also received additional funds, which allegedly went to the campaign of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The President has denied the allegations when it came out during the Senate investigation of the controversial fertilizer scam.

"This department has a dark history of massive graft and corruption and that experience was enough reason for all of us to be suspicious about the real motive behind the request for more funds," Ampatuan said.

Yap said the additional funds would be spent for upgrading of the country's irrigation facilities, warning that failure to do so could drastically reduce rice harvest in the next two years.

Yap also said the additional budget would be spent to boost production in the country's corn areas.

But Ampatuan said the funds could be spent to ensure the victory of the administration candidates.

"The government has to stop using the plight of the poor farmers as front of their own agenda," Ampatuan said.

The Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas (KMP) also aired the same suspicion. "The government seems to be hatching a scam bigger than that of the P728-million fertilizer scam for the coming elections," Danilo Ramos, KMP secretary general for Southern Mindanao, said.

Ramos said the problem of farmers on farm inputs "has been there since time immemorial."

"They should have acted on it long time ago and not now when they obviously needed money for the elections," Ramos said. ***Jeffrey M. Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao***

Fear of bird flu stops Sagada 'ikik' tradition

SAGADA, MT. PROVINCE—FOR the first time in this town's history, residents, including children, stopped the *ikik* or the traditional bird hunting, due to threats of the avian influenza virus, a local official said.

In 2005, the town council passed an ordinance banning *ikik* to prevent the spread of the bird flu believed carried by migratory birds but local officials said some ignored the law.

Councilor Dave Gulian said some residents defied the ban then by stressing that *ikik* is a traditional practice that can never be stopped in the town.

"But now, we noticed that no one went to Mt. Ampacao to hunt. We also monitored the exit points where the hunters would normally pass through and locals would say no resident had gone up the mountain," said Gulian.

Mt. Ampacao, which straddles the villages of Ambasing and Tanudan, is a favorite hunting ground of residents and tourists. *Ikik*, which uses nets to trap birds, is done at night when migratory birds roost on the mountain during the cold season, from September to March.

Tourist guides who practice the *ikik* also stopped hunting birds due to fear of the possible outbreak of bird flu in the town.

"I used to do it before with other residents but I did not hunt birds recently for security purposes. I am afraid of bird flu and there is a local directive banning the *ikik*," said George Dapliyan, a member of the Sagada Environmental Guides Association (Sega).

Gulian said the absence of specks of light in the mountain at night, coming from lamps carried by bird hunters, was an indication that *ikik* had stopped.

He said residents were more aware of the dangers of bird flu, which has infected humans and ravaged the poultry industry in Asia and other parts of the world, because of the information campaign that the local government launched. ***Desiree Caluza, Inquirer Northern Luzon***

Iloilo health execs raise alarm over rabies

By David Israel Sinay
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—A LITTLE OVER A month from the start of the year, the province of Iloilo already registered five deaths caused by rabies, according to the Iloilo Provincial Health Office (IPHO).

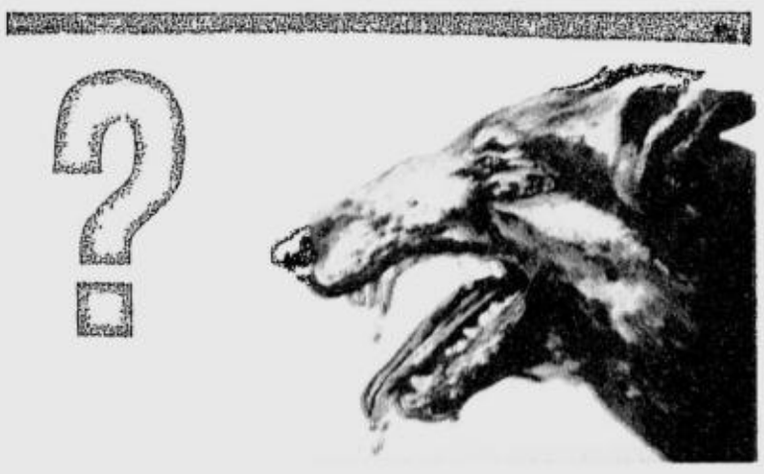
The IPHO also expressed alarm over the unusual number of deaths when compared to those in 2006, which reached only 11.

Dr. Patricia Grace Trabado identified the latest victim as two-year-old Nerwin Japitanan of Barangay Dungoc in San Joaquin town, who died on Feb. 2.

Trabado urged residents to restrict the movement of their pets, such as dogs and cats. "They must have a cage for these animals, she said during a press conference held Monday.

At least 16 deaths were listed in Iloilo due to rabies last year, while more than 5,000 cases were reported.

The IPHO had immunized 45 percent of the dog population in the province last year, up from only 13 percent in 2005, she said.



A RABIES awareness poster reminds the people of Iloilo of the dangers of stray dogs. The number of rabies cases in the province is alarming, according to health authorities. ARNOLD ALMACEN/INQUIRER VISAYAS

Based on the Iloilo provincial canine prevention and control program 2006 summary, there were about 245,501 dogs in the province. Of these, however, only 115,236 were vaccinated.

Also, Trabado lamented that despite the IPHO's campaign to ban the eating of dog meat, people in far-flung municipalities find dog meat irresistible.

Eating a rabid animal exposes a person to the risk of being inflicted by rabies.

Trabado said dog bites caused 90 percent of the rabies cases, while cats, monkeys and other animals were responsible for the rest of the cases.

Mejorada said all stray dogs must be killed and eliminated.

The Animal Welfare Act, according to Mejorada, allows the immediate killing of these animals because of the danger of letting them roam.

Dr. Silvino Teodosio Jr., provincial veterinarian, said the Animal Welfare Act provides that stray dogs must be shot in the head by the Philippine National Police, using guns not lower than .22 cal. It must be done outside public view using a licensed gun, Teodosio said.

The province's 42 municipalities and a component city have existing ordinances to terminate all stray dogs.

Since 2004, Teodosio said local government units in the province of Iloilo have dog control ordinances.

"It is a matter of political will for the local chief executives on the enforcement of these ordinances," he said.

The local ordinances even hold the owner of the dog liable if his pet bites someone, Teodosio said.

NORTH COTABATO police chief Federico Dulay Jr. looks at an armored personnel carrier that bogged down while it was pursuing Moro guerrillas who forced out of jail 40 inmates that included three terror suspects. CHARLIE SENASE/INQUIRER MINDANAO

Woman dies in shelter where villagers fled to after clash

MIDSAYAP, NORTH COTABATO—A 60-year-old ailing woman has died in one of the eight evacuation centers here as displaced families continued to refuse to return home for fear of clashes between Moro Islamic Liberation Front guerrillas and government soldiers.

The residents, according to authorities, want an assurance they would be safe in their homes.

Councilor Vivencio Deomampo, chair of the town council's health committee, could not say when the woman died but he said that she was already ill when her family fled the fighting two weeks ago.

At least six persons—three of them rebels—died in clashes in at least three villages here since Jan. 25.

The clashes sent about 6,000 people to safer grounds. The evacuees continued to stay in crammed evacuation centers despite a localized truce reached last week.

Deomampo said they fear that more evacuees would get sick because of the unfavorable condition in the evacuation centers.

"They need safe water, clothing and food. They are in a very deplorable situation," Deomampo, also a physician, said.

Pearl Traspederme, municipal health chief, said that during the day, the evacuees in Barangays Nabalawag, Mudsing and Tugal would move out of the classrooms they have been occupying so that children can attend their classes.

"During the night, they would occupy the classrooms again," Traspederme said.

She described the evacuees' conditions as miserable.

"We will only return home when we no longer see soldiers and Moro rebels around," Palambay Malang, 40, a mother of two, said.

Midsayap Mayor Romeo Araña said they were working out a solution to the land conflict that has triggered the clashes. ***Edwin O. Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao***

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MAIN ISSUES IN LAPID-PINEDA FIGHT

Corruption and illegal gambling

By Tonette Orejas
City of San Fernando, Pampanga

SAN FERNANDO ARCHBISHOP Paciano Aniceto has not criticized Pampanga Gov. Mark Lapid and Board Member Lilia Pineda, the front runners in the gubernatorial race, although these politicians are hounded by the very issues that Catholic bishops want to stamp out: Corruption and illegal gambling.

Both got no praise either from the 70-year-old Aniceto, who has been administering to the largely Catholic Pampanga in the last 15 years.

"They are both administration supporters," was the least that Aniceto said of Lapid, 27, and Pineda, 56, in an interview on Saturday.

Rather than center on politicians or throw himself in the fray by openly endorsing or discrediting any of them, the activist in Aniceto prefers to focus on strengthening the capacities of voters to ensure an honest election and to convince them to discern who to choose as political leaders. The Church's machinery for that task remains the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting.

"Let the people exercise their right to choose," Aniceto said.

He said, though, that "moral integrity, performance and competency," in that order, are the measures of qualities of candidates.

Pressed to give his views on the sources of wealth and campaign funds of Lapid and Pineda, Aniceto said: "Those are all allegations."

The bishop was referring to the money allegedly stolen by Lapid and his father, Sen. Manuel "Lito" Lapid, from quarry taxes since 1995, and Pineda's money coming from her husband, Rodolfo "Bong" Pineda, through 30 years of "jueteng" operations in Luzon.

"There should be evidence, documents, witnesses who will testify. There are pertinent forums for evidence to clarify," Aniceto said.

But a priest and a lay leader wanted Aniceto to openly give moral counsel by rejecting Lapid and Pineda and to demand other Kapampangans to step forward and aspire for public office.

These proposals indicated the desperation of some Catholics who find themselves "caught between the devil and the deep blue sea" as the May 14 elections draw near.

Another lay leader saw Lilia Pineda as a better option. But the hesitation stems from what her husband would do in her administration should she win.

However, it was unlikely for Aniceto to become a strident critic like Lingayen-Dagupan Archbishop Oscar Cruz. That was not Aniceto's leadership style in his more than 50 years in the priesthood.

Hands off

Still, Lilia Pineda's big contributions to the archdiocese's charities and church-building projects since Mt. Pinatubo's 1991 eruptions were no tickets for her to get help in her election campaign, according to another priest.

That was because the clerics in 2005, amid the second "juetengate" scandal, reiterated the policy for "some priests" to stop benefiting from jueteng money for personal comfort or parish projects.

The policy was first enforced in 2000 at the height of the jueteng scandal involving then President Joseph Estrada.

Aniceto confirmed that the policy remained in effect and the anti-illegal gambling campaign in parishes was without letup. He earlier rued the lack of efforts by police and local officials to stop jueteng, which is being passed off now as the small town lottery, a government-sanctioned game.

As the Lapid-Pineda showdown showed signs of intense rivalry, Aniceto expressed hope that their camps would not resort to violent means.

"Violence is not good for the province, given its stature. Kapampangans are by nature not a violent people. We always had generally peaceful elections here," the bishop said.

Paradox

For a politician in Bataan who has Kapampangan roots, the May 14 elections bring out many paradoxes in Pampanga.

"You have a province of many heroes and heroines and great men and women like President Diosdado Macapagal and Jose and Pedro Abad Santos. It is sad that your choices now are limited to Lapid and Pineda," the politician said, pointing out what he perceived to be the degeneration of leaders.

Many of Pampanga's governors in more than 400 years originated from the landed gentry and recently, industrialists and lawyers. That was until Lito Lapid, a movie actor from a landless family in Porac town, rose to power in 1992.

Lapid's reign at the capitol saw no end when he groomed his eldest son, Mark, to take his place as the Arroyo administration plucked him for the Senate.

The younger Lapid is a college graduate with unimpressive academic credentials. Lilia Pineda finished high school and claimed she passed the hard school of life with flying colors.

The second irony, according to the politician, is that quarry and jueteng money, if at all true, is going to be used to win a public office.

But the use of jueteng money for the elections is not an entirely new practice in Pampanga, or even elsewhere.

Reports of Bong Pineda contributing to the campaign kitties of local and national politicians had been around since the Aquino administration.

The Newsbreak Magazine reported that in the controversial May 2004 elections, Pineda's money funded the post-election break-in by the "Antidote Group" at the Batasang Pambansa to sneak in the "corrected" statements of votes in ballot boxes kept there for a possible recount following the electoral protest by the late presidential candidate Fernando Poe Jr.

Bong Pineda denied operating jueteng, making election contributions or funding special operations to rig the results in favor of Ms Arroyo, his town mate and "kumare."

He admitted, though, to helping the Lapids in the 2004 elections. The Lapids have not denied or confirmed Pineda's help but have strongly denied rigging the votes for the President.

Arroyo's allies

A businessman said Mark Lapid and Lilia Pineda do not only reflect the kind of allies that President Macapagal-Arroyo keeps. They also represent deeper political connections with national significance, he said.

Senator Lapid, in joining the administration's senatorial ticket, drew in votes for her in 2004. The Pinedas were known to have strongly campaigned for her in Pampanga, said to be one of the four provinces where the massive election cheating took place. (The other three are said to be Cebu, Bohol and Iloilo).

The businessman expected Ms Arroyo to groom good leaders because her Luzon Urban Beltway super region program requires great leadership.

In the assessment of several businessmen and politicians, Ms Arroyo took a bias for Senator Lapid and his son but for a bigger political reason, which Leftist leaders in Pampanga called blackmail on the Lapids.

On Friday last week, the senator appeared to have caved in, announcing his plan to run for mayor of Makati City, and admitted to doing that on a mission for the administration: To seize the country's financial district out of the hold of the political opposition.

In Pampanga, the senator's move is viewed as a bargain for the victory of his son's reelection bid and the nonfiling of graft suits against them.

The latest gambit by the senator has not daunted Lilia Pineda. She told the INQUIRER on Monday: "I am not backing out. I want to do something good for my province. That's my only purpose. And it's coming from my heart. I was forced to stand up (against the Lapids) because no one dared to fight them. I don't mind the criticisms hurled at me or even the controversy involving my husband."

Her running has two redemptive values on her family and on her, according to a capitol observer who reflected what supposedly was the view of lawyer Estelito Mendoza, the former Pampanga governor and justice minister.

First, the Pinedas will cease to be known as a gambling clan but a family that helped end the Lapid era in Pampanga politics.

Second, in being governor and with the power that goes with it, she shall finally get out of the shadow of her husband.

Still, another official suspected that Bong Pineda was not that quixotic, that he was fighting the Lapids to merely get back at them for snubbing his son, Dennis, mayor of Lubao, as the younger Lapid's running mate.

Lilia Pineda said there should be a stop to speculations about her husband's motives. "I just want good leadership in Pampanga and Bong is there to help me," she said.

Former Rep. Juan Pablo Bondoc said the Lapid-Pineda fight is far from being a battle of principles. "It is a battle for the division of spoils in illegal quarry and illegal gambling," said Bondoc, who was still studying whether to run for governor or not.

Number battle

Police sources expect the coming elections to be the costliest ever in Pampanga. Both camps will spend great amounts of money in order to win. The more cunning voters will exploit by selling votes.

Resource-wise, the Pinedas enjoy the edge, they said. Local and police officials said Bong Pineda makes between P10 million and P15 million daily from jueteng.

But Pineda, in several interviews, had denied involvement in illegal gambling.

The corps of *kabo* and *kubrador* (jueteng managers and bet collectors)—estimated at 20 from each of the province's 530 barangays or 10,600—is in itself a vote-delivery machinery.

If it was indeed true that the Lapids pocket the P300-tax for every truckload of sand, then the estimate of their earnings from the 2,000 trucks that pass in Porac alone could reach P600,000 daily.

"*Balas ampung bolitas ing labanan* (This is going to be a fight between quarry money and jueteng money)," said a retired journalist.

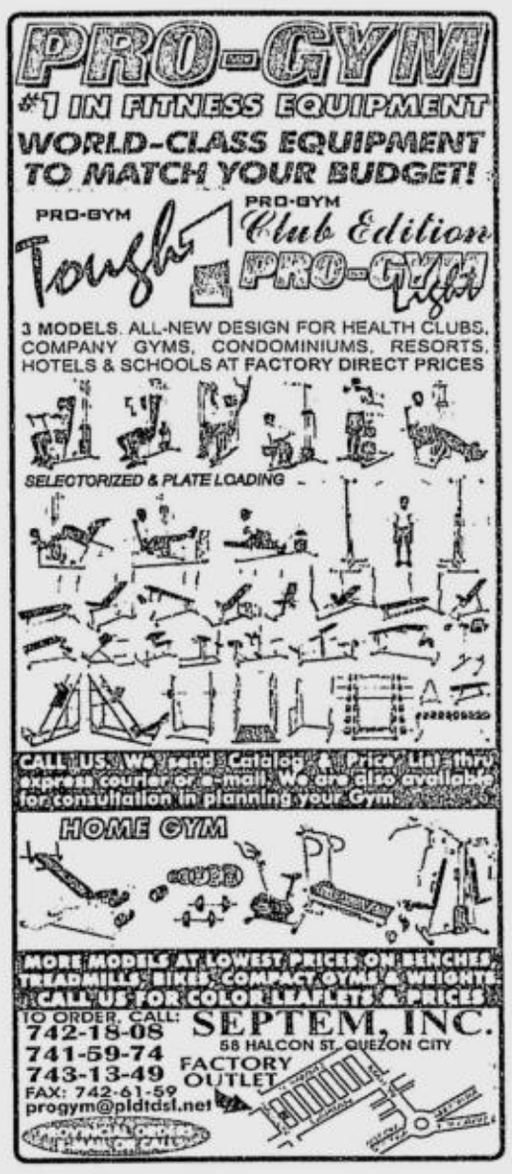
As of Monday, Lilia Pineda had 15 mayors to her side. The governor had five. Foisted with these kinds of choices, will the 1.03 million voters in Pampanga ditch them?

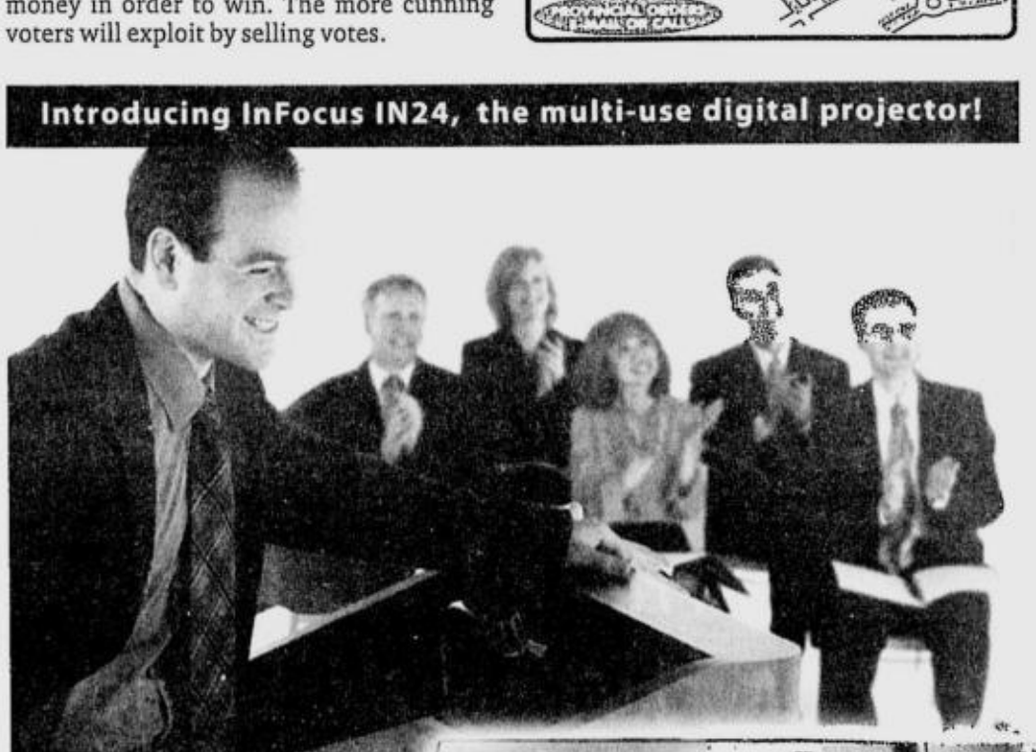
"They will have to let their conscience rule," said Aniceto.

LILIA Pineda TONETTE OREJAS

PAMPANGA Gov. Mark Lapid INQUIRER PHOTO

> 'It is a battle for the division of spoils in illegal quarry and illegal gambling'





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NBI seeks answers from Leviste driver

'Employee could give vital info'

By Tina G. Santos

THE NATIONAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION (NBI) will summon the man who was seen with Antonio Leviste on Jan. 12, the same day the former Batangas governor shot his longtime friend and aide, Rafael de las Alas.

Lawyer Ruel Lasala, chief of the NBI National Capital Region, yesterday said they would issue a subpoena to Levi Panganiban, who works as a driver at Leviste's Jalco Group of Companies Inc. The firm's office is at the LPL Towers in Legaspi Village, Makati City, site of the killing. Based on logbook entries, Panganiban was one of the last persons to enter the building where De las Alas' body was later found.

"We will get his statement in the hope that it can help us in the case," Lasala said, adding that Panganiban is expected to appear at the bureau within the week.

De las Alas was found dead between noon and 1 p.m. on Jan. 12 inside Leviste's office on the ninth floor of the LPL Towers. He had been shot several times. Leviste later admitted that he shot the victim in self-defense.

According to Lasala, the tactical operations center of the Makati Police received a report about the incident at around 1:20 p.m.

Citing entries in the logbook of building security guards, Lasala said Panganiban arrived by himself at the LPL Towers at 11:50 a.m.

At 12:52 p.m., he was seen leaving the building together with Leviste. Panganiban, however, returned shortly after but left again at 12:57 p.m. This time, he was "with a certain Cecille," Lasala said. "Based on that logbook entries, Panganiban may provide us with information vital to our investigation," the NBI official added.

Last Monday, Manolito Ambrosio, who also worked for Leviste, went to the NBI to give his statement on the incident. Ambrosio, whose name also appeared in the LPL logbook, told the NBI that before the shooting, Leviste had asked him to step into his office and mediate in an argument between him and De las Alas.

Computer shops favorite target of Marikina robbers

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

BURGLARS PREYING ON COMPUTER SHOPS in Marikina City robbed four shops in just three days, carting away more than P1 million worth of computers and other equipment, the police reported yesterday.

In all four incidents, the theft was discovered when the owners opened their computer shops in the morning, leading police to believe that the burglaries were carried out between midnight and dawn.

Police are still verifying if the robberies were carried out by the same group although they admitted that this would be difficult to establish because no witnesses have surfaced so far, said PO3 Felixberto Aguila, who is handling two of the four cases.

Two of the four incidents were discovered only yesterday morning.

JST Enterprises owner Stalin Tiongco, whose shop is in Barangay Concepcion Dos, said he lost eight computers, eight video cards and eight memory cards to the thieves.

Cyber Experience Computer Services owner Alfredo Bognot, 37, also reported that the robbers took 14 computers, 14 video cards and 14 memory cards from his shop in Barangay Parang. On Monday, two computer shop owners reported that thieves had forcibly opened their establishments and took with them several computers.

DID YOU KNOW

FOUNDED in December 1947, the Manila Jaycees is the first Asian chapter of Junior Chamber International, an organization that seeks to motivate young adults to improve themselves and their communities. The Manila Jaycees became the Junior Chamber International Philippines—more commonly known as the Philippine Jaycees Inc.—in February 1949. The group is behind the prestigious Outstanding Young Men award which began in 1959 as the Ten Outstanding Young Men. The Philippine Jaycees has about 6,000 members aged 18 to 40. Its national headquarters is on Don Alejandro Roces Avenue in Quezon City.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Ex-policeman on board stolen cab arrested by Las Piñas police

By Julie M. Aurelio

ANTICAR THEFT AND INTELLIGENCE OPEratives arrested a former policeman who was spotted with a stolen taxi cab in Las Piñas City on Tuesday afternoon.

Elmer Ramos, 31, who used to be assigned at the Eastern Police District, was arrested after concerned residents of Phase 5, BF Martinville, Manuyo 2, called up the police to report the presence of a stolen cab in the area.

An investigation showed that the cab was stolen from its owner in Pasig City at around 11 a.m. that same day.

The responding officers, PO2 Eden Lumbauan and PO1 Mandie Astudillo, said they decided to wait for the owner of the Basic Taxi, with plate number TWX 643, to appear.

They later spotted Ramos getting into the car. Ramos was about to start the engine when the policemen approached him and asked him to present the vehicle's documents. Instead, Ramos showed a police identification card signed by Director Jose Lalisan Jr. of the Philippine National Police Directorate for Personnel and Records Management.

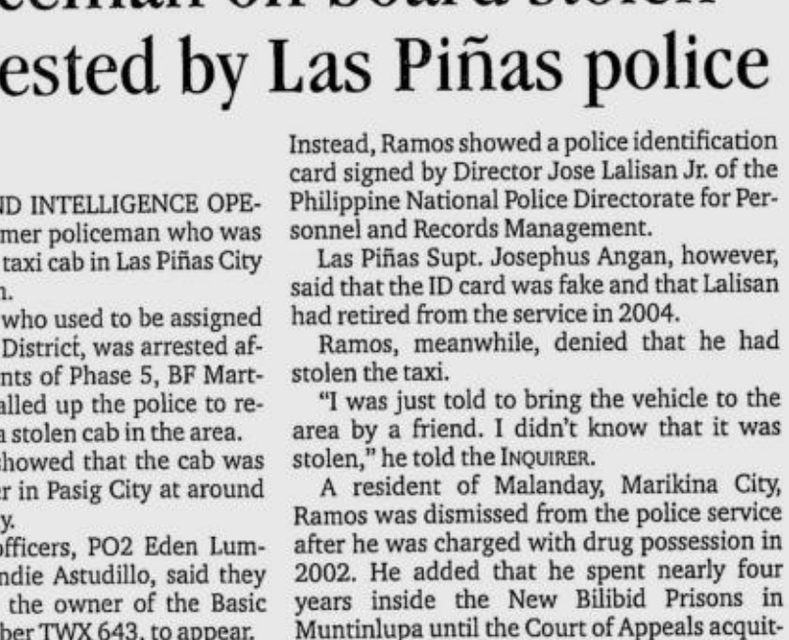
Las Piñas Supt. Josephus Angan, however, said that the ID card was fake and that Lalisan had retired from the service in 2004.

Ramos, meanwhile, denied that he had stolen the taxi.

"I was just told to bring the vehicle to the area by a friend. I didn't know that it was stolen," he told the INQUIRER.

A resident of Malanday, Marikina City, Ramos was dismissed from the police service after he was charged with drug possession in 2002. He added that he spent nearly four years inside the New Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa until the Court of Appeals acquitted him of the charges last year.

Police said Ramos would be charged with usurpation of authority and violation of the Anti-Fencing Law.



PUZZLER
This sari-sari store on Barangka Street, Mandaluyong City sports a sign that looks like a play on words (for "turo-turo," or indicating your item of choice by pointing to it).

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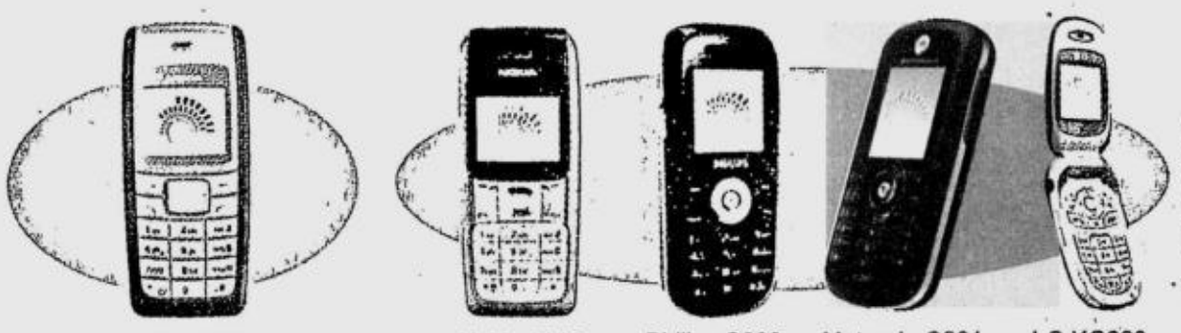

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Controversial footbridge in Parañaque goes down

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE METROPOLITAN MANILA Development Authority (MMDA) yesterday dismantled for good the remaining portion of a makeshift footbridge that connected a Muslim neighborhood to Roxas Boulevard in Baclaran, Parañaque City.

The operation took on a subdued tone, unlike the incident on Jan. 5 where two residents—one of them a 14-year-old boy—were killed and two others seriously wounded following a clash between the MMDA clearing team and residents. As a result of the clash, the MMDA managed to destroy only half of the footbridge.

The demolition yesterday was carried out under the supervision of the Office of Muslim Affairs (OMA), and residents were helpless as they watched the operation.

Bobby Esquivel, head of the MMDA Clearing Operations Group told the INQUIRER yesterday that the OMA offered to mediate in the negotiations between the agency and the leaders of the community to avoid a repeat of the violent incident last month.

The community of an estimated 5,000 residents strongly opposed the demolition of the footbridge, saying it was their only access to and from their homes.

However, Esquivel said the bridge had to be destroyed to discourage residents from vending along Roxas Boulevard—the metropolis' corridor to the international airport.

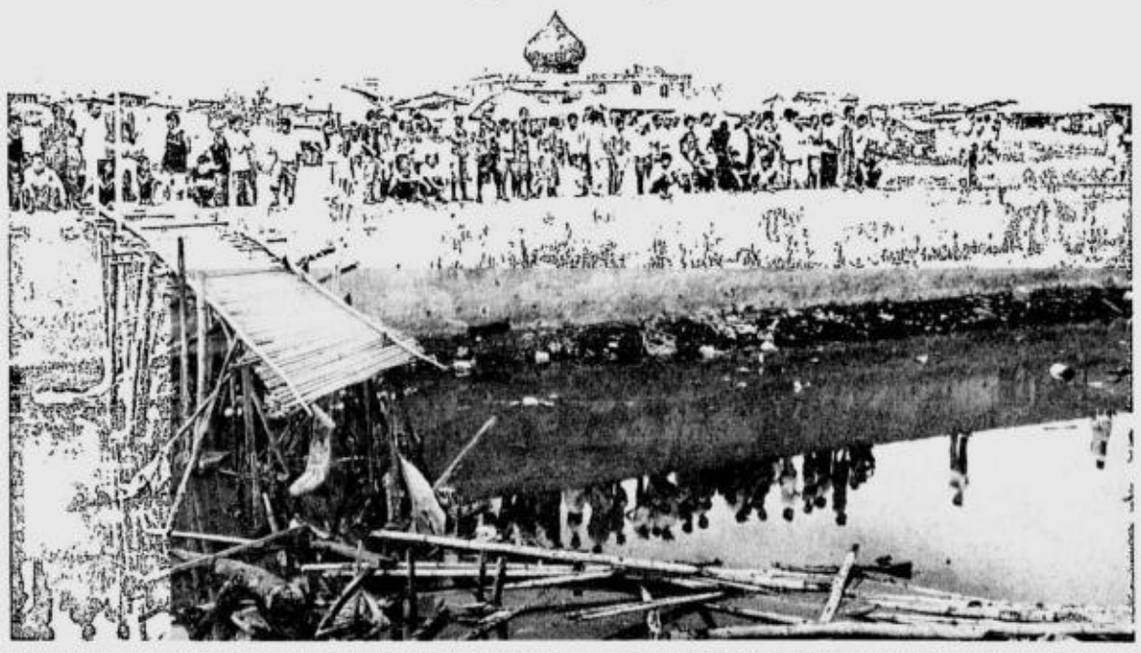
"We can't please anybody. We have no choice but to push through with the project so that our roads to the airport won't look awful," he said.

He added that access to the neighborhood must come from within the limits of Pasay City, where it belongs.

Meanwhile, the Pasay City government yesterday said the MMDA should have given them time to clear the alternate passageway, a grass-covered 500-meter stretch beside the neighborhood leading to the Edsa Extension. Several MMDA operatives, however, have already started clearing the grassy path.

Some residents who refused to take the longer route, waded in the murky waters of the creek. Students were also worried about their safety while walking on the dirt road at night.

"They should have demolished the bridge next month or until after the end of classes," said Mayor Allan Panaligan, who went to the area to oversee the operation.



FILE photo of the makeshift footbridge that once linked a Muslim neighborhood in Pasay City to Roxas Boulevard in Baclaran. The structure was demolished yesterday to stop residents from vending on Roxas Boulevard, in line with a Metropolitan Manila Development Authority project to restore order in the area. ERIK ARAZAS

Wedding rites without frills in Makati City set on Feb. 23

By Jocelyn R. Uy

WANT A HASSLE-FREE WEDding?

Couples in Makati City who wish to tie the knot may go to City Hall on Feb. 23 to take part in a mass wedding dubbed "Kasalan sa Makati 2007."

Their guests will be top officials of the city who will serve as witnesses. They will be led by Mayor Jejomar Binay who will also officiate at the civil rites.

Binay's wife, Elenita, and Vice Mayor Ernesto Mercado will serve as the primary sponsors of the brides and grooms, with all department heads of City Hall as secondary sponsors.

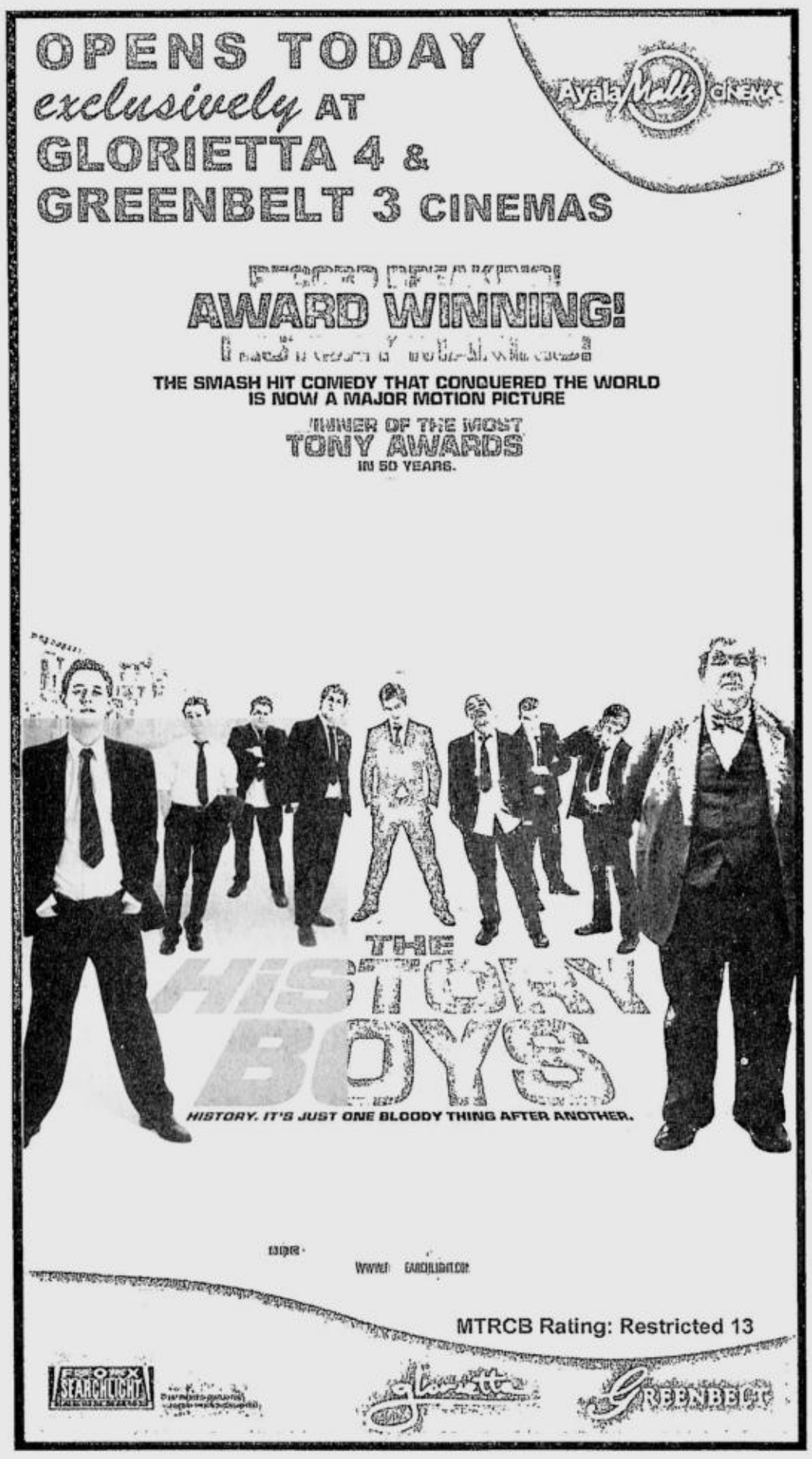
Bridal bouquets will be provided free to the brides but the couples should bring their wedding rings.

Those who intend to marry must be of legal age and residents of Makati City. They should have been living together for at least five years. Most importantly, both of them must be single.

Interested couples should register with the Museum and Cultural Affairs Office on J.P. Rizal Street in Barangay Poblacion. They should also submit the following documents: Marriage license, birth certificates, barangay certificates and individual community tax or residence certificates.

On the day of their wedding, grooms are expected to be in white long-sleeve shirt and white or dark pants.

Brides, on the other, should wear a simple white gown and a headdress.



Outstanding Mandaluyong residents get 'Bayani' award

By Emman Cena

UNSUNG HEROES? MANDALUYONG City has its own share.

As part of the city's 62nd anniversary celebration, five persons were conferred on Monday the title of "Tatlong Bayani (Three Heroes)," the highest civilian award given to outstanding Mandaluyong residents.

The first ever recipients of the award were retired Army Gen. Jaime S. de los Santos, businessman Antonio Cabangon Chua, Narciso Bernardo, an engineer; Dr. Esperanza de Castro, a medical doctor; and educator Dr. Armand Vincent Fabella. They were chosen for bringing honor to the city by excelling in their respective fields.

The award was named after Gen. Vicente "Kalentong" Leyva, Laureano Gonzales and Andres Bonifacio — the heroes of Mandaluyong who were immortalized in a monument located in Barangay Hagdang Bato Itaas.

De los Santos, the former chief of the Philippine Army, received the Andres Bonifacio award for excellence in public service and law enforcement. He served for 37 years in the Armed Forces, during which he received various awards and citations.

The recipients of the Laureano Gonzales Award were Chua (business and media), Bernardo (sports), De Castro (medicine and science) and Fabella (education).

Chua, a businessman-journalist, was cited for his contribution "to the advancement of commerce and development, as well the promotion of freedom of the press, both in print and radio."

Bernardo received the award for his achievements in the field of basketball, having been voted Rookie of the Year 1957 and Mr. Basketball of the Philippines from 1962 to 1963.

De Castro, on the other hand, pioneered the family planning program in Rizal province in 1965.

She is also the founder and the first president of the Mandaluyong Medical Society.

Fabella, an educator, was chosen for his outstanding achievements in education, and held top positions in the Jose Rizal University.

"(The Tatlong Bayani Award) may have been the sweetest of all awards and distinctions received by the resident-recipients because usually it is very difficult to impress your own people," said Mayor Neptali M. Gonzales II who handed out the awards.

"*Mahirap maging propeta sa sarili mong bayan* (It is hard to be a prophet in your own country)," he added. "But these people have proven otherwise. They worked not for the award but because it is really in their hearts to serve the country and its people with excellence."

METROBRIEFS

Fire hits food stall in Mandaluyong mall

A FIRE hit a food stall inside a mall in Mandaluyong City at 5:10 a.m. yesterday. Commuters who were waiting for a ride in front of the establishment were the first to spot the thick black smoke coming out of the Starmall. They promptly called the attention of a security guard who asked for assistance from firemen. The fire began in a stall rented out to Goldilocks bakeshop and spread to the adjacent Binalot restaurant. Fire investigator Victorio Tablay said that a short circuit in one of the bread racks caused the blaze that lasted for about an hour. Damage to property was later estimated at P100,000 but no one was reported killed or injured. The fire did not affect operations of the mall which opened several hours later.

Emman Cena

Philnabankers reunion set Feb. 9

RETIREES and nonretirees alike of the Philippine National Bank are invited to participate in a night of dancing, songs, games and a raffle draw called "Philnabankers Forever, Reunited Part 5." The reunion will be held on Feb. 9, at 6 p.m., at the PNB Long Gallery, PNB Financial Center, 3rd floor, President Macapagal Boulevard, Pasay City. For details, contact Tina Magsaysay-Advincula at 0919-2052828 or 5263131 local 4034; Angel Doble at 0917-5201183 or 5263131 loc. 2506, Ana Almirañez at 0917-3687124 or 8059185 and Art Quebal 0917-8047100 or 8928135.

Close watch on Internet cafés in QC mulled

By DJ Yap

SCHOOLCHILDREN WHO PLAY hooky by hanging out in Internet cafés and gaming centers in Quezon City may soon be barred from entering such establishments during class hours.

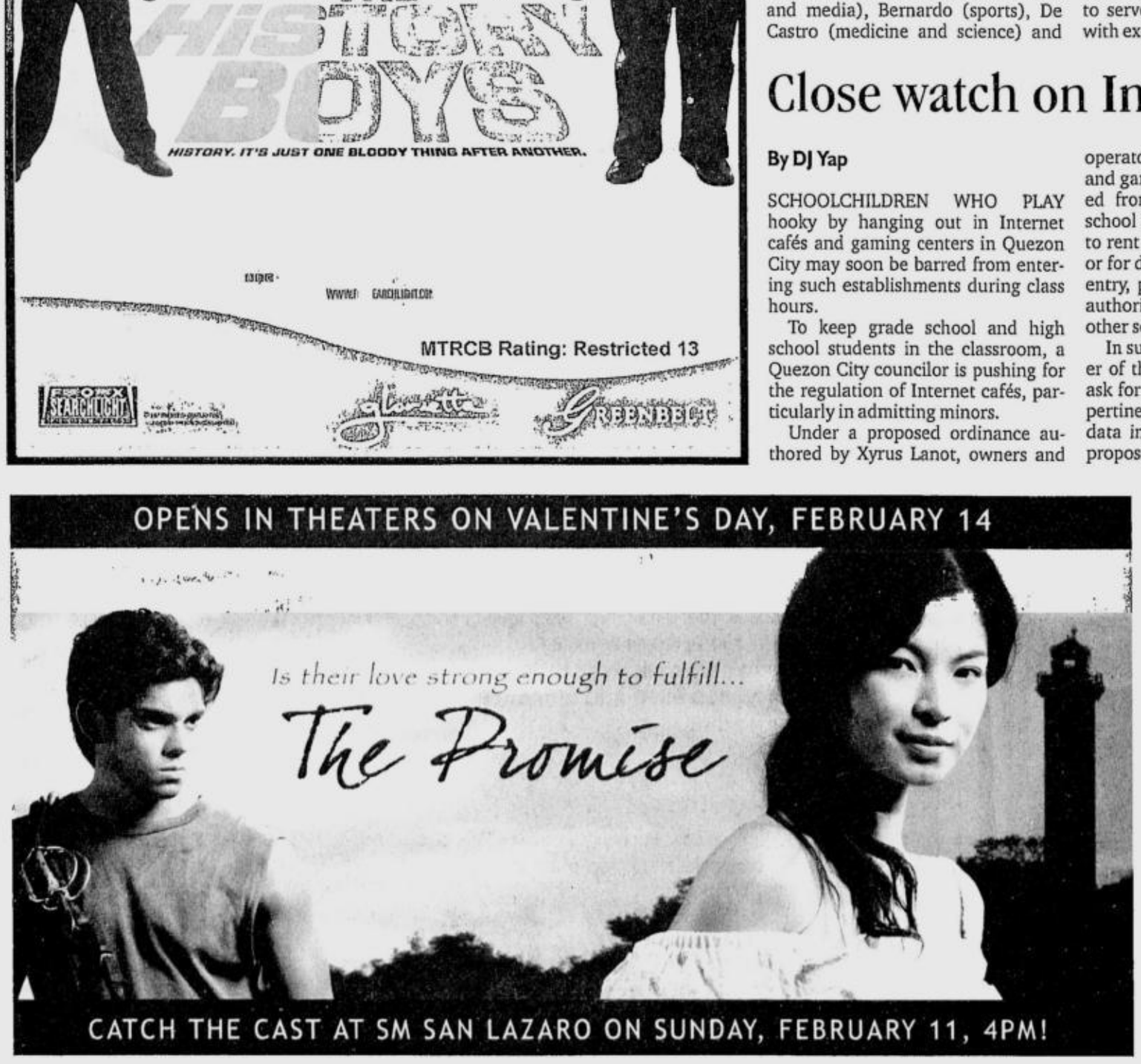
To keep grade school and high school students in the classroom, a Quezon City councilor is pushing for the regulation of Internet cafés, particularly in admitting minors.

Under a proposed ordinance authored by Xyrus Lanot, owners and operators of computer rental shops and gaming centers shall be prohibited from accepting students during school hours. But students who want to rent computers for writing reports or for doing research may be allowed entry, provided they show a written authorization from their teachers or other school authorities.

In such cases, the owner or manager of the computer rental shop shall ask for the student's name and other pertinent information and record the data in a logbook, according to the proposed ordinance.

They shall also be required to post signs outside their shops, stating that "minors are not allowed during regular school hours." Violators shall be fined P2,000 on the first offense and P3,000 on the second offense. Third time offenders shall be fined P5,000, on top of seeing the permanent revocation of their business permit.

Should the proposal pass, the Business Permits and Licensing Office and the Department of Public Order and Safety shall formulate and implement the rules and regulations within 30 days of its effectivity.



Cops nab woman suspected of duping fellow seniors

By Tina G. Santos

AN ELDERLY WOMAN WAS ARrested by Manila policemen for allegedly duping her fellow senior citizens by pretending to be a government employee engaged in the processing of privilege cards for seniors.

Charged with estafa was Kate Danica Reyes alias Lyn Aquino, 64, of Tomas Mapua Street, Sta. Cruz, Manila.

The Special Operations Group of the Manila Police District said the arrest was prompted by complaints from several elderly residents who claimed that Reyes had introduced herself as an employee from the Office of Senior Citizens Affairs (Osca) of the Manila City Hall. Her victims claimed they were enticed by the suspect to join a local government program called "Magbibigay ng Puhunan at Groceries."

Reyes allegedly asked her victims to give her P30 each as a "livelihood loan" in exchange for grocery items from Mayor Lito Atienza. She also promised her victims that she would process their senior citizen IDs.

One of the victims, Patricia Herrera, told authorities she became suspicious when Reyes failed to show her any ID.

Herrera said a check with City Hall showed that Reyes was not connected with the Osca.

Scientists explore possible new way to fight AIDS

WASHINGTON—A NATURALLY occurring molecule saves vital immune system cells from cellular suicide during the onslaught of the AIDS virus and might help keep the body's natural defenses working in HIV-infected people, a study found.

The findings represent a potential new avenue to fight the effects of the human immunodeficiency virus, HIV, according to US National Institutes of Health scientists whose work was published on Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Dr. Paolo Lusso and colleagues at the NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases looked at the role played by interleukin 7 in averting the death of T cells, a kind of white blood cell important to the immune system.

Interleukin 7 is a substance important in maintaining proper functioning of the immune system.

AIDS has killed more than 25 million people since it was first recognized in 1981. About 40 million people now live with HIV, with sub-Saharan Africa hardest hit.

Lusso expressed "reasonable optimism" that treatment involving interleukin 7 may benefit people with AIDS, a disease for which no cure exists.

"I don't think one solution will be applicable to all the patients. It's possible that IL-7 (interleukin 7) may benefit some patients and do nothing in other cases," Lusso said in an interview.

"But I think we are moving in the right direction because we are starting to appreciate that antiretroviral therapy alone (existing AIDS drug treatment) is not sufficient to bring back a full immune competence, and we are starting to identify at least some strategies that may work."

An insidious aspect of HIV is that the virus attacks the body's natural defenses—the immune system.

In assaulting the immune system, HIV hides inside certain T cells. These cells, as the infection progresses, commit cellular suicide—called apoptosis—undermining the body's ability to combat infections and certain cancers. In fact, the virus manages to induce the suicide of many more T cells than it directly infects.

The researchers, who also included Dr. Lia Vassena and NIAID Director Dr. Anthony Fauci, used blood samples from 24 HIV-infected people. They added interleukin 7 to the blood samples and then gauged the survival of T cells.

The actual patients themselves were not treated with interleukin 7.

The samples with interleukin 7 displayed lower levels of T cell death. The benefits differed from sample to sample based on the person's stage of infection, the study found.

The researchers believe interleukin 7 potentially could be used alongside existing AIDS drugs to bolster the immune system.

Lusso noted that existing AIDS drugs can keep the virus at bay for years, but damage to the immune system commonly persists even after years of such treatment.

Scientists want to find new ways to remedy these immune defects, with the aim to make the immune system functional even in HIV-infected people.

Lusso said apoptosis may be a major mechanism through which T cells die in AIDS. The new study is important, he said, in that it identifies how interleukin 7 may help—by preventing these cellular suicides.

He said the next step is a study in which monkeys with the the simian equivalent of HIV are given interleukin 7 to see if it blocks immune system dysfunction and immune cell depletion. *Reuters*

Indon floods trigger disease concerns

AN INDONESIAN man pulls residents in a cart in a flooded street in Jakarta Feb. 6. Flood waters receded in parts of Indonesia's capital on Tuesday, but huge areas remained submerged. REUTERS

JAKARTA—FLOOD WATERS RE-ceded in parts of Indonesia's capital on Tuesday, but huge areas remained submerged and officials were on guard for outbreaks of disease among the estimated 340,000 people displaced.

Businesses were also trying to assess the economic impact of the floods, which have caused power blackouts, cut telecommunications and made many key roads impassable.

Top politicians have also been visiting flood victims, as officials traded blame and the media asked why few lessons seemed to have been learnt after equally bad floods five years ago.

Tini Suryanti of the Jakarta health department said medical staff were trying to focus on sanitation to prevent disease.

"We must be alert over cockroaches and rats. People should clean themselves with soap." Supplies of antibiotics were running low in the city, the Jakarta Post newspaper reported.

The floods have killed at least 36 people, Jakarta police spokesperson, Ketut Untung Yoga Ana said. Most had either drowned or been electrocuted.

He said flooding in some parts of the city—which together with the suburbs is estimated to have a population of 14 million—near the Ciliwung river had not improved.

"Other areas which are outside the passage of rivers are getting better," the police spokesperson said.

President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono has been visiting flood-hit areas since last week, but critics said there's more needed to be done.

"It is only a courtesy from his part to show he cares about the plight of the little people. What he needs to show is not that but how he can bring fundamental changes to the right target," said legislator and former minister Muhammad Hikam.

He said Yudhoyono, who is still riding high in opinion polls, needed to deliver on his promises to have a chance in the next elections in 2009.

Helwi, a 35-year old street vendor, who has been living in a tent along the rail tracks since last week when water inundated his Central Jakarta house, agreed.

"Our officials can only talk about caring for the little people. We want proof," he said.

Environmentalists blamed poor city planning in a city that has seen a huge construction boom since the financial crisis of the late 1990s.

"This disaster could have been anticipated but the government does not have a plan for a worst-case scenario. Over the past 30 years water catchment areas in Jakarta have been reduced from about 70 percent to less than 10 percent," Torry Kuswardono of the leading green group, Walhi, told Reuters.

The city's downtown appeared to be relatively flood-free on Tuesday, although muddy flood water can appear and recede quickly as runoff from upland areas runs into rivers in the city.

There was more heavy rain overnight in Jakarta, although the weather brightened on Tuesday. Massive traffic jams continued in some areas and several train stations were flooded.

Mohamad Sulistyo of the flood crisis center said flood water remained up to 3 meters deep in the Kampung Melayu district in the east of the capital.

"Jakarta has 44 districts and 40 are flooded," he said. There has been some concern the floods could fan inflation, but the central bank as expected lowered its key interest rate on Tuesday, the ninth reduction in less than a year.

The rupiah and Jakarta stocks have also been fairly steady.

Indonesia's chief economics minister Boediono told reporters on Monday that he did not see a long-term impact from the floods on Southeast Asia's biggest economy. *Reuters*

1st US officer stands trial for refusing to fight in Iraq

WATADA AP

FORT LEWIS, WASHINGton—A court martial trial opened Monday for the first US military officer to openly refuse to go to war in Iraq as protests in his support were organized in several cities across the country.

First Lt. Ehren Watada, 28, pleaded not guilty on charges relating to his refusal to join his unit as it departed for Iraq in June 2006 arguing that the war was illegal and immoral.

Supporters of the officer organized a demonstration outside Fort Lewis, the military base where his court martial trial got underway Monday 70 km south of Seattle in the state of Washington.

About 20 other protests were planned around the country to show support for Watada, including in New York, Los Angeles, and outside the White House in Washington.

Watada faces up to four years in a military prison on charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice of expressing contempt toward President George W. Bush, of conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman and purposely missing his unit's deployment when it deployed to the Middle East on June 22, 2006.

The charges cite statements Watada made on June 6 defending his decision on the basis that Bush initiated an illegal and immoral war.

"I could never conceive of our leader betraying the trust we had in him. As I read about the level of deception the Bush administration used to initiate and process this war, I was shocked. I became ashamed of wearing the uniform. If the president can betray my trust, it's time for me to evaluate what he's telling me to do," Watada said, according to the court martial charge sheet.

The rights group Amnesty International says three US privates have already been sentenced to between 12 to 15 months in jail for refusing to fight in Iraq.

Although the US Army insists that a soldier has to respect the chain of command and cannot choose which war to fight in, Watada has said that under the US Constitution he has the right to refuse an illegal order.

Watada joined the army in 2003 and was posted in South Korea until 2005, when he was transferred to Fort Lewis to prepare for deployment to Iraq.

Instead he requested to be transferred to another unit and proposed that he be deployed to Afghanistan. That was turned down.

Since his arrest he has been assigned to an office job in Fort Lewis while awaiting his trial.

His case has garnered significant support in a nation that has turned sharply against the Iraq war. *AFP*

WORLDBRIEFS

Iranian envoy kidnapped in Iraq

BAGHDAD—An Iranian diplomat has been kidnapped in the Iraqi capital, Tehran said on Tuesday. Gunmen "linked to the defense ministry" of Iraq kidnapped an Iranian diplomat, Iran's foreign ministry spokesperson said. "Jalal Sharafi, the second secretary at the embassy in Baghdad, was abducted on Sunday by a group linked to the defense ministry, which operates under the supervision of US forces in Iraq," Mohammad Ali Hosseini said. He said the kidnapping took place in front of the Baghdad branch of the Iranian state-owned bank Bank Melli. *AFP*

Wave of defections hits S. Korea's ruling party

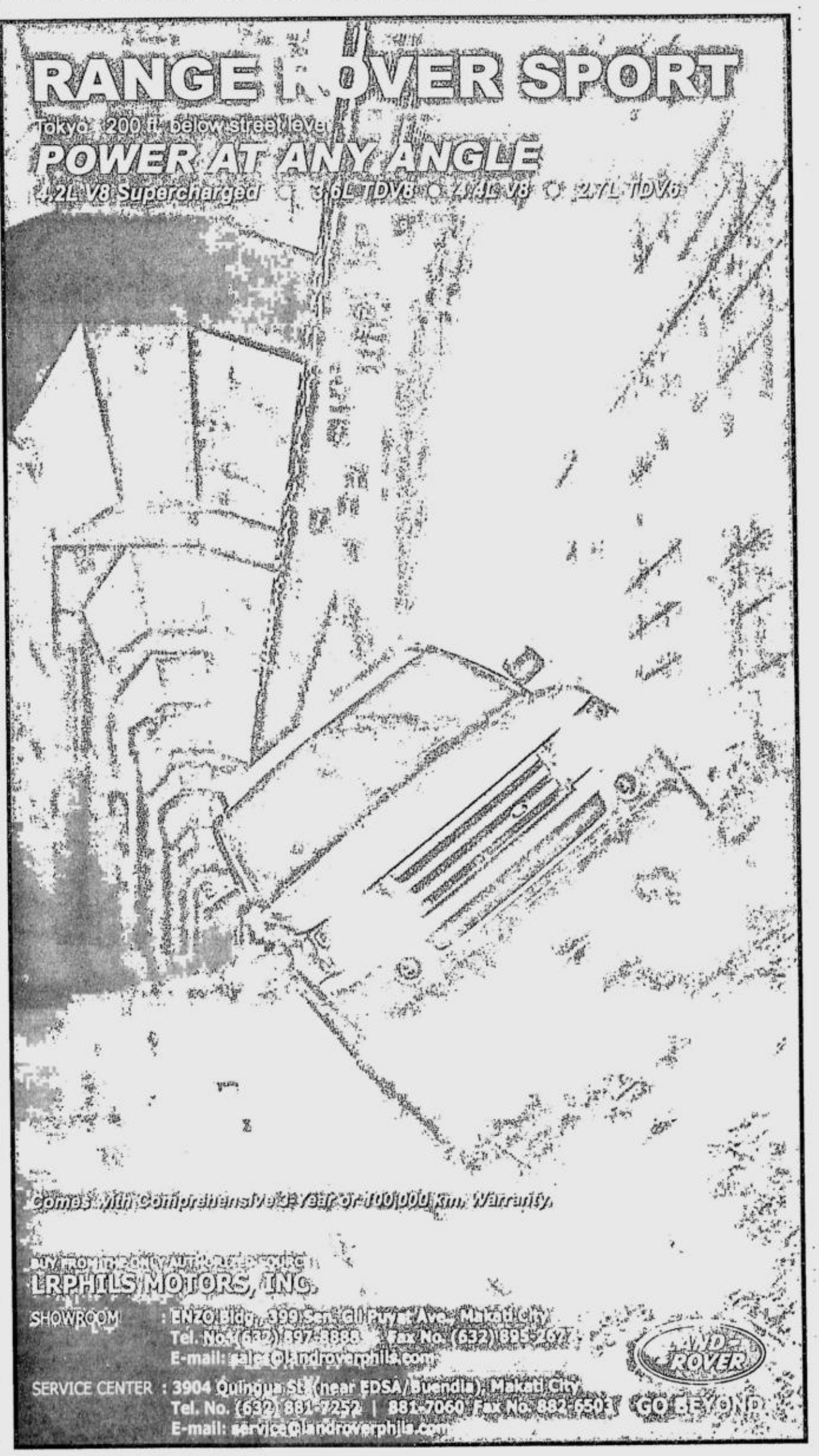
SEOUL—South Korea's ruling Uri Party teetered Tuesday toward possible collapse as 23 lawmakers quit to create a new political outfit, sending President Roh Moo-hyun's group into a minority ahead of December polls. "With our deep regret and apology to the public, which is against the Uri Party, we are determined to give up our current power and become a seed to form a new united party," Lee Jong-Gul, one of the legislators, told a press conference. The walkout is a new blow for the embattled Roh, who is to stand down in February next year, and weakens his chances of pushing legislation through parliament before the end of his term. Uri now has only 110 seats compared to 127 for the conservative opposition Grand National Party (GNP). *AFP*

60 feared dead in shipwreck off Camerron

YAOUNDE—At least 60 people were feared dead Monday after a passenger ferry operating between the west African states of Cameroon and Nigeria was shipwrecked, a private radio station in Cameroon reported. An unknown number of passengers were rescued in the accident off the coast of Tiko in southwest Cameroon, 60 km from the economic capital Douala and 250 km west of the capital Yaounde, Satellite FM said. The station said that likely causes for the tragedy included unfavorable weather conditions, the poor state of the vessel and overloading. Authorities have opened an enquiry. *AFP*

Iran ready to test 300 centrifuges

VIENNA—Iran has set up over 300 centrifuges in an underground nuclear plant and will test them soon as it moves towards industrial-level enrichment of uranium in defiance of UN demands, diplomats told AFP Monday. The diplomats were speaking after reports last week that Iran has begun the installation of 3,000 centrifuges in a huge underground bunker at its main nuclear facility in the central town of Natanz. "The Iranians have put together at least two cascades (production lines)," of 164 centrifuges each, said a diplomat who closely monitors both Iran and the Vienna-based UN watchdog International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) *AFP*



The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco

Global warming to hit poor worst, says UN chief

NAIROBI—THE WORLD'S poor, who are the least responsible for global warming, will suffer the most from climate change, UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told environment ministers from around the world on Monday.

"The degradation of the global environment continues unabated ... and the effects of climate change are being felt across the globe," Ban said in a statement after last week's toughest warning yet mankind is to blame for global warming.

In comments read on his behalf at the start of a major week-long gathering in the Kenyan capital Nairobi, Ban said all countries would feel the adverse impact of climate change.

"But it is the poor, in Africa and developing small island states and elsewhere, who will suffer the most, even though they are the least responsible for global warming."

Experts say Africa is the lowest emitter of the greenhouse gases blamed for rising temperatures, but due to its poverty, under-development and geography, has the most to lose under dire predictions of wrenching change in weather patterns.

Desertification round the Sahara and the shrinking of Mount Kilimanjaro's snow-cap have become potent symbols in Africa of the global environment crisis.

UN environment agencies have been lobbying Ban to play a leading role in the hunt for a successor to the Kyoto Protocol on cutting greenhouse gases, which expires in 2012.

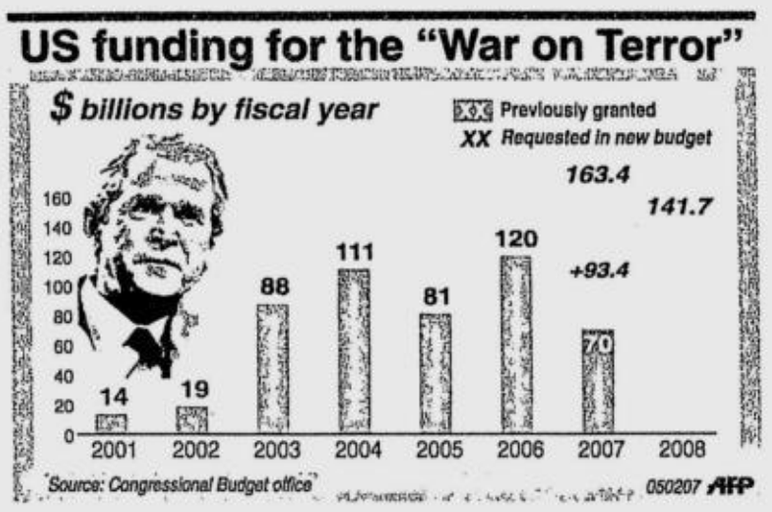
Ringing in the ears of delegates at Monday's start of talks attended by nearly 100 nations was last week's warning by a UN panel that there was a more than 90 percent chance humans were behind most of the warming in the past five decades.

Governments are under huge pressure to act on the findings of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which forecast more storms, droughts, heatwaves and rising seas.

Reuters

Bush seeks more funds for Iraq, Afghan wars

WASHINGTON—PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH presented the US Congress with a mammoth $716.5 billion budget request Monday to fund wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and pay for a major expansion of the US military.



Bush's defense budget, unveiled as part of a larger government budget plan for fiscal 2008, seeks to acquire more troops, warships and aircraft for a force strained by the 4-year-old war in Iraq.

The budget request came in three pieces—$481.4 billion for the Pentagon's 2008 base budget; $141.7 billion for the "global war on terrorism" in 2008; and $93.4 billion to cover additional war costs in the current fiscal year to Sept.30.

The huge spending package comes amid spiking demands for US forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, which military leaders have warned are putting at risk the Pentagon's ability to meet challenges elsewhere in the world.

"The resources we devote to defense should be at the level to adequately meet the challenges of the global strategic environment the United States faces today," said Defense Secretary Robert Gates.

But Representative Ike Skelton, chair of the House Armed Services, said the sums involved were "staggering." "We cannot provide an adequate national defense on the cheap, but neither can we afford to simply ratify the president's request without performing the due diligence and oversight our constitution requires," he said.

It marked the first time the administration has sent Congress inclusive war-related budget requests, instead of the piecemeal emergency funding requests it has used previously to fund operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Defense Department comptroller Tina Jonas said the Pentagon's estimated war costs for 2008 were lower at $141.7 billion than this year's total because it assumed that a surge in US forces now underway will be temporary.

"It is based on an assumption of 140,000 troops in Iraq and 20,000 in Afghanistan, which is our baseline prior to these policy changes that were made on the surge," she said.

AFP

Ex-NY mayor Giuliani joins race for White House

WASHINGTON—FORMER NEW York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who guided his city through the Sept. 11 attacks, threw his hat into the 2008 presidential race Monday, saying on television he was "in this to win."

"We still have to formally announce and do a few more things. But this is about as close as you get" to entering the race, Giuliani told Fox News.

Asked if he is "in it to win it,"—the phrase used by New York Senator Hillary Clinton when she announced her White House run last month—Giuliani answered: "Gosh yeah. That's the only reason to do it." "I'm in this to win ... My campaign is going to be about the future," he added.

Giuliani, who earned the nickname "America's Mayor" after leading New York through the trauma of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center, has led other likely candidates for the Republican presidential nomination in recent polls.

Earlier Monday he took a key step in the race when he filed an official statement of candidacy with the Federal Election Commission.

His closest rival for the Republican nomination is Arizona Senator John McCain, who has also filed FEC papers but has not publicly declared he is joining the race.

Recent opinion polls have Giuliani leading McCain by a thin margin for the Republican nomination, with Newt Gingrich, the former speaker of the House of Representatives, in third position.

Other declared Republican hopefuls in 2008 include Kansas Senator Sam Brownback, former Massachusetts governor Mitt Romney, and former Arkansas governor Mike Huckabee.

The nominations for both parties will be decided in a series of state-based caucuses and primaries beginning next January, with the election itself in November.

Giuliani could face an old foe if he becomes the Republican nominee in 2008, with New York Senator Hillary Clinton currently considered the favorite for the Democratic Party nomination.

AFP

GIULIANI AP

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WHAT'S INSIDE

■ **Pacman fights** again with Viloria in Texas /A25

SPORTS

Website: www.inquirer.net/sports

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**

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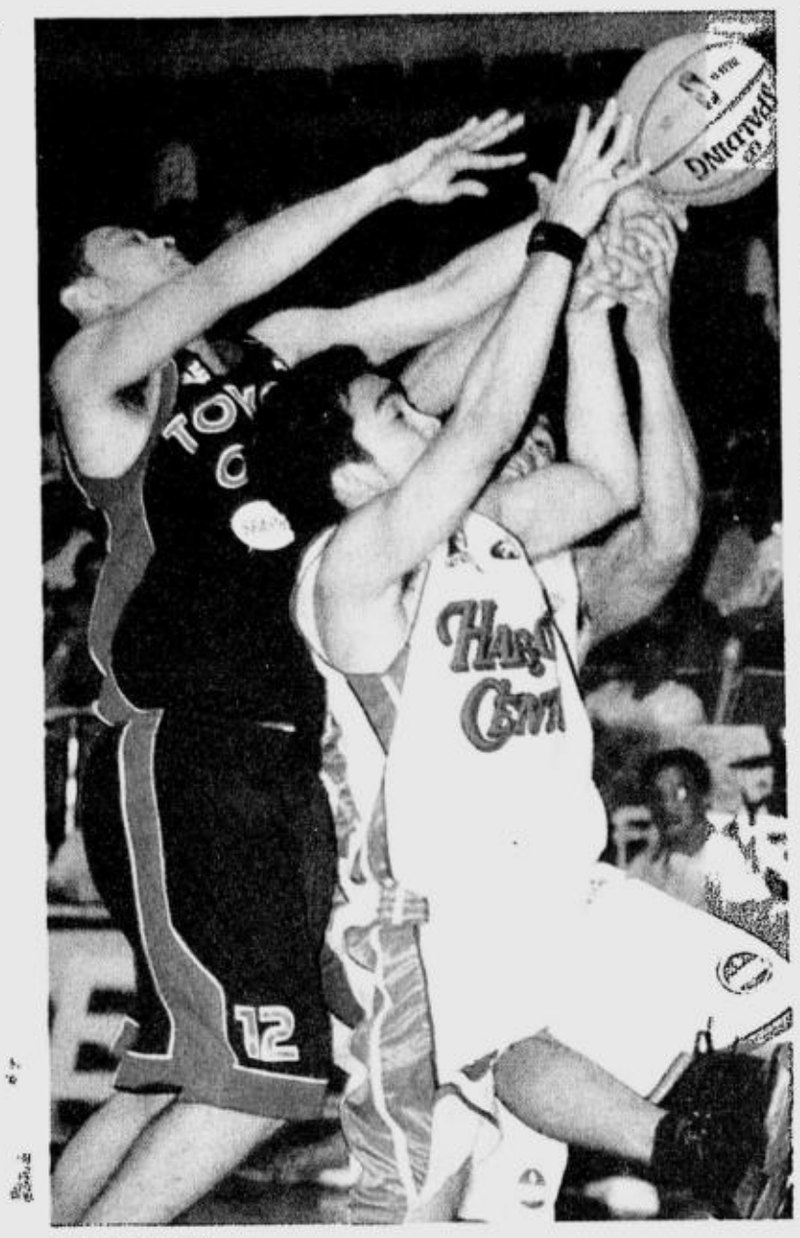
■ **Shaq** is back, powers Heat against Bobcats /A26

Comets avert sweep; Sparks up



TOYOTA Otis' Jonathan Aldave (left) disputes the rebound with Harbour Centre's Ryan Araña (foreground) and another Port Master in the final quarter of the two teams' semifinal encounter at the Olivarez Sports Center Gym in Parañaque yesterday. Spitfire Marvin Cruz rose to the occassion again as the Sparks blasted the Port Masters, 73-60, for a 2-1 lead in the semifinal series.
INQUIRER PHOTO / RYAN LIM

By Jasmine W. Payo

ALL OF A SUDDEN, MAIL AND More—its slumping star included—is back to its dominating form in the PBL Silver Cup.

The Comets spoiled a Hapee-PCU sweep by coasting to a 78-62 victory in Game 3 of their best-of-five semifinal series yesterday at the Olivarez College Sports Center.

And all it took to stay alive was a proper mindset.

"I told them in the dugout that this is not a series that we're down 2-0, approach it just a usual game so there's no pressure," said coach Lawrence Chongson.

That, and a little mental nudge that awoke a sleeping giant.

Cebuano slotman JR Quiñahan made up for his previous four poor performances with 11 points, six rebounds, five assists and three blocks.

"We played mind games with him just to motivate him," said Chongson. "We also designed a play especially for him."

Earlier, Toyota Otis moved within a win of another Finals stint at 2-1 after a 73-60 triumph against Harbour Centre in their own series.

Marvin Cruz overcame a hurting back and shoulder to lead the Sparks in a late-game outburst that turned a slim 59-55 edge to a 12-game spread, 67-55, in the final two minutes.

Chito Jaime, a 6-foot-4 standout from the AMA Computer University, also starred for the Sparks by firing seven of his nine points in the final period.

While Chongson talked his team into snapping out of a spell, Toyota Otis coach Louie Alas zipped his lips and let his wards play their game.

"Jaime was a revelation," said Toyota Otis coach Louie Alas. "We had no huddle in the pregame. I thought I might be over-coaching them. I told them to just do their thing."

Sweet-shooting Patrick Cabahug drilled in 17 points, while Cruz delivered 16 markers.

"If at least three of our players finished in double figures, we always have a good chance," said Alas.

Mail and More blew the game wide open in the second period with Bravo, Ronjay Buenafe and Jason Ballesteros conspiring for a 36-21 halftime lead.

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The Teeth Masters crawled back within seven, 58-51, but the Comets responded with a run capped by triples from Bravo and Elmer Espiritu for a 68-51 gap heading into the last two minutes.

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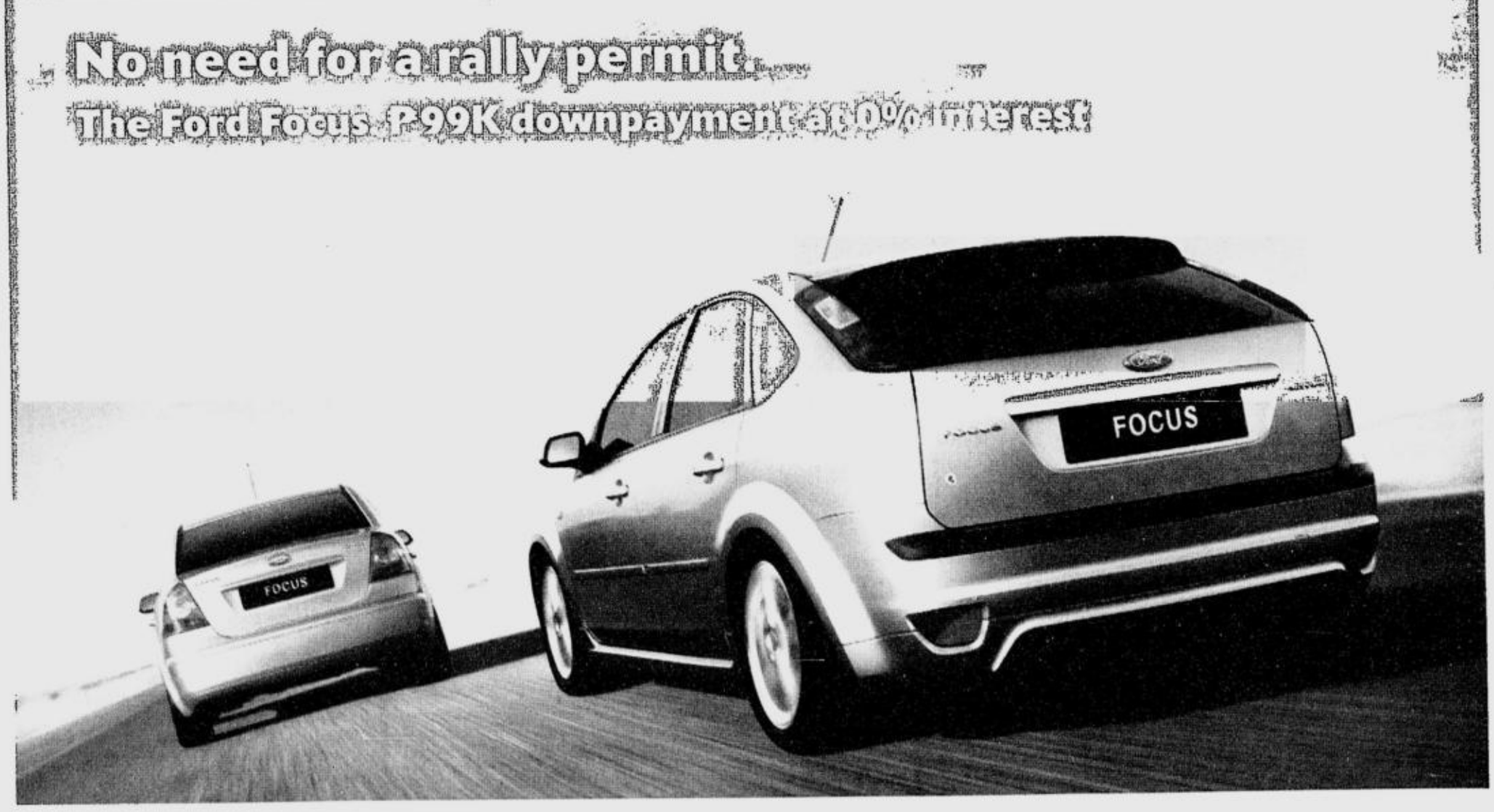

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The scores

First Game

TOYOTA OTIS 73—Cabahug 17, Cruz 16, Santos 13, Jaime 9, Aldave 8, Jazul 4, Coronel 2, Dedicatoria 2, Daa 2, Fajardo 0.

HARBOUR CENTRE 60—Intal 16, Ortiguerra 10, Lanete 8, Williams 5, Raymundo 4, Capati 4, Vergara 3, Arana 3, Gamboa 2, Gaco 2, Fernandez 2, Asoro 1.

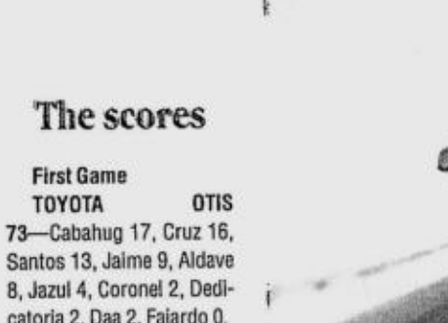
Quarters: 18-13, 37-31, 52-52, 73-60

Second Game

MAIL AND MORE 78—Bravo 16, David 13, Quinahan 11, Buenafe 10, Ballesteros 10, Espiritu 5, Te 4, Viray 4, Canizares 3, Del Rosario 2, Aquino 0.

HAPEE-PCU 62—Belga 11, Sanz 11, Castro 10, L. Rodriguez 10, David 8, Borboran 6, Moreno 6, J. Rodriguez 0, Butel 0, Larong 0, Bucao 0, Razon, Hugnatan 0.

Quarters: 21-15, 36-21, 56-40, 78-62



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BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

MEN'S EYES WENT MOIST.

Of course, there was no open crying—only quiet tears of joy.

There had never been a scene like it in Philippine basketball.

No, not even in the golden era—the 50s and the 60s—when the Philippines would regularly annex Asian basketball titles during the reign of the great Caloy Loyzaga.

Did they cry when the Philippines captured the bronze medal in the 1954 World Basketball Championship, best finish ever by a team from Asia, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil?

Maybe not. But at 2:30 in the afternoon on Monday, graying men embraced, others shook triumphant fists, while a few let out a quiet scream, holding back tears.

* * *

You, too, must have had the same sweet sensation a few times inside a movie house.

Monday, there was the return of the happy ending at the ballroom of the Dusit Hotel in Makati.

Yeah, this was it.

In the first place, there should never—never again, please—be a repeat of the painful period when the fate of Philippine basketball was put in the balance.

Amateur basketball here should never again be left in the hands of selfish figures who must've already forgotten to determine bad from good.

* * *

While basketball has been elevated to the status of a religion by many hereabouts, the past two years were empty and faithless.

After the international basketball federation, Fiba, slapped a suspension on the Philippines for a monumental leadership mess, all the basketball happenings were reduced to worship inside a godless cathedral.

It was worse than playing inside an empty arena morning, noon and evening.

They all kept running, running—but there was no exact place to run to.

* * *

Yes, a street survey by the INQUIRER readily showed how deeply devotees cared for their favorite game here.

It's no exaggeration to say that prayers did play a very vital part in the slaying of the monster.

There was also no way we could overemphasize the golden role of Manny V. Pangilinan in achieving ultimate triumph.

In fact, Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann, who went out of his way to assure the Philippines of a return to the international basketball scene, singled out MVP as "one with the Midas touch."

* * *

Those were golden moments out there Monday.

While the national basketball scene had crawled with villains, there suddenly was a prevalence of heroes.

While Pangilinan evidently did everything—from preparing his team, funding, coaching it and acting as court general during its several meetings with the Fiba—there were many others who tried to score the victory basket.

Go Teng Kok, contrary to fears, kept his word and herded the BAP group to the Unity Congress.

Sen. Jinggoy Estrada showed up, spoke briefly, and was applauded for his role in the restoration.

There was no way to measure the immense role played by PBA commissioner Noli Eala in the epic revival.

There were also Junjun Capistrano, Bernie Atienza, and other gentlemen who opted to stay in the background despite their great contributions.

We had to readily hug and thank Fritz Gaston, who resigned as BAP director and spokesman at the height of the leadership tug-of-war to show the noble makings a true god-fearing Atenean.

Of course, there was evident despondence on the part of the ashen BAP sec-gen Graham Lim after he was rejected in his bid to wangle the powerful executive directorship of the newly formed national basketball association.

What a day! Long live our heroes.

The monster is shackled, good has triumphed over evil.

* * *

(*TRIBUTE:* Prayers please for Abraham Dingle, a former newspaper boy who fought his way to become one of the legends of Philippine sportswriting. An inspiration to succeeding press-box soldiers, Dingle, with a classic, compelling style, passed on last week at 75. He will be interred at the Himlayang Pilipino at 3 p.m. today. Goodbye, my idol and friend.)

Top choices for tough job

Who will be RP basketball's powerful, day-to-day boss?

TRINIDAD

BERNARDINO

ALCOSEBA

By June Navarro

JUST A DAY AFTER MANNY V. PANGILINAN announced that there were no preordained names in the Basketball Association of the Philippines-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas' (BAP-SBP) search for an executive director, names have started to sprout to form an unofficial list of candidates.

Curiously, most of the names were involved with the Philippine Basketball Association at some point in their careers.

Sources said former PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino, former PBA player Fritz Gaston and former PBA finance officer Ricky Palou have been floated by various sectors for the post of executive director, the working arm of an association.

The person named to that post is tasked with handling the day-to-day duties of the association.

Philippine Basketball League Commissioner Chino Trinidad, a former sportscaster who covered the pro league, and PLDT executive Al Panlilio, a former alternate governor for Talk 'N Text in the PBA board, were among the names identified by INQUIRER sources as those who are also being considered by the unified body.

Philippine Olympic Committee spokesperson Joey Romasanta, Mindanao-Visayas Basketball Association Commissioner Raul "Yayoy" Alcoseba and former Pilipinas Basketball president Bernie Atienza are also on the mythical list.

Pangilinan, the BAP-SBP president, is also looking at the possibility of installing a foreigner as executive director.

Pangilinan said the international basketball federation (Fiba) secretary-general Patrick Baumann actually broached the idea of designating a non-Filipino as executive director on an interim basis.

"We should be open to this. And I hope it doesn't attract too much criticism if we engage someone outside of our shores to help us out," said Pangilinan.

"So long as it's an interim position and would eventually settle down with a Filipino. The point is we have to choose the right guy."

Pressed for a name during the post-Unity Congress press conference, Pangilinan declared that "there was no preordained name" for the powerful position.

But, he added, the SBP has "to look for an executive director as soon as practical."

Meanwhile, the POC has initiated a move to fast-track the accreditation of the BAP-SBP with the national Olympic body.

POC president Jose "Peping" Cojuangco has called for a general assembly scheduled on Feb. 16 to tackle the membership of the new national sports association for basketball.

"It is expected that after the president's report to the body, Mr. Pangilinan will be invited into the general assembly and sworn in as a member of the POC," said POC deputy sec-gen Mark Joseph.

After the general assembly, the imprimatur of the POC will be transmitted to the Fiba for the lifting of the country's suspension, along with the key documents that led to the formation of the new cage body.

RP Cuppers: Cheer for us, we'll deliver

SUPPORT US AND WE WILL DELIVER.

That's the plea and promise made by the Philippine Davis Cup team yesterday.

Powered by a pair of world-ranked Fil-Americans and backstopped by two steady homegrown talents, the Philippines is tipped to do well against Pakistan in their Asia-Oceania Zone Group 2 tie set this weekend at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

United States-based Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino as well as PJ Tierro and Johnny Arcilla, face the Pakistanis in their bid to climb back to Group 1 next year.

The Filipinos, coached by Martin Misa and Raymond Suarez, are hoping to see the same crowd support they got during the Manila SEA Games in 2005 where they emerged as champions.

"It's getting closer each year," said the 29-year-old Mamiit, referring to the team's bid for a Group 1 slot next year. "This is the progress of Philippine tennis. The excitement is building up."

"We're at a very high level right now—we're out to make a statement we're in good shape we're eager, we're hungry," added Mamiit, ranked No. 180 in the world, during the PSA Forum at Pantalan Restaurant in Manila.

"We expect a lot of big things this year and hopefully this is the start," added Taino, at 31 still at the prime of his career.

The Pakistanis, despite their unfamiliarity with the RMTC surface, are no pushovers as they are just coming in from Group 1.

The drawing of lots is scheduled tomorrow at the Century Park hotel on Vito Cruz, Manila. The first two singles matches will be played Friday, the doubles on Saturday and the reverse singles on Sunday. Admission is free.

Making up the Pakistani squad are Aqeel Khan, Jalil Khan, Yasir Khan and Asim Shafik. Head coach is Hamid Ul Haq and team manager is Iftikhar Ahmad Rao.

Roy Luarca

Boom Boom, Z ready to rumble

RISING BOXING STARS RAY "BOOM BOOM" Bautista and Z Gorres yesterday expressed confidence they can hurdle their upcoming fights against champions from Mexico and Colombia.

The two arrived from Los Angeles, California, Monday where they trained at the famed Wild Card gym of American trainer Freddie Roach for more than a month in preparation for their Feb. 24 bouts at the Cebu City Sports Complex.

Gorres (26-1-1) spearheads the "Moment of Truth" card as he challenges Mexican champion Fernando Montiel for the World Boxing Organization (WBO) super-flyweight championship.

Bautista (21-0, 16 KOs) takes on Columbian Feider Viloria (16-1-1, 11 knockouts), the Intercontinental super-bantamweight champion.

"*Kundisyon ako ngayon*," Gorres said in yesterday's PSA Forum at the Pantalan in Manila.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority

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Invitation to Apply for Eligibility and to Bid

SUPPLY AND DELIVERY OF PEZA FORMS
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1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY (PEZA), through its Corporate Budget for the CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of PhP 4,546,649.92 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the Supply and Delivery of PEZA Forms (1st & 2nd Quarters of 2007). Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA now invites sealed Bids from eligible Bidders for the following GOODS:

PARTICULARS	QUANTITY (pads)
Form No. 8101 – Import Permit	9,300
Form No. 8104 – Export Tally	11,300
Form No. 8105 – Application for Permit to Bring Goods from the Customs Territory into the Zone	6,200
Form No. 8106 – Application for Permit to Bring Goods from the Zone into the Customs Territory	14,000
Form No. 8110 – Application to Withdraw Goods from the Zone for Sample Purposes	1,400
Form No. 8112 – Application for Permit to Sell Ecozone Made Goods Within the Ecozone	1,400
Authority to Withdraw	6,600
Boat Notes	8,300
Form No. 51-C – Official Receipts	8,000
PEZA Personalized Official Receipts (continuous form)	90,000

Deliver of the GOODS is required within thirty (30) calendar days from the date receipt of the Notice to Proceed. The description of an eligible Bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary pass/fail criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a single similar project within the last three (3) years with an amount of at least 50% of the ABC and at least five (5) years experience in the printing industry. In addition, bidders must have filed their annual income (CY 2005 or CY 2006) and business tax returns (VAT and/or Percentage Taxes for the previous 6 months) via the Electronic Filing and Payment System (eFPS) of the Bureau of Internal Revenue. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested Bidders may obtain further information from PEZA and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from **01 to 09 February 2007, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays** from the address below upon submission of a certified copy of their PhilGEPS Registration Certificate and upon payment of a nonrefundable fee in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos Only (PhP 2,000.00). The method of payment will be on a cash basis only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on **15 February 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the 6th Floor, Social Hall, PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or before **11:00 a.m. of 27 February 2007**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid security in the form of GSIS Surety Bond in the amount of not less than 2.5% of the ABC or in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, bank draft or irrevocable letter of credit in the amount of not less than *1% of the ABC*. Late Bids shall not be accepted.
8. Bid opening shall be on **27 February 2007** at **2:00 p.m.** at the 6th Floor Social Hall, PEZA Bldg. III, Roxas Blvd. corner San Luis St., Pasay City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
3/F PEZA Building, Roxas Boulevard corner San Luis St., Pasay City.
Tel. No. 891-6444 / Telefax No. 551-9587
e-mail: peza_bac_secretariat@yahoo.com
website: www.peza.gov.ph

(PDI–Jan. 31 & Feb. 7, 2007)

POLOMOLOK WATER DISTRICT
PROPOSED EXPLORATORY / PRODUCTION WELL
PUROK 6, BARANGAY POLO

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Polomolok Water District (PWD), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder contract

Name of Contract	Exploratory / Production Well Drilling
Location	Purok 6, Barangay Polo, Polomolok, South Cotabato
Brief Description	Well to be drilled is by Rotary Drilling Method according to the following parameters: Target Depth = 220 meters Target Capacity = 30 liters / sec. Borehole Diameter = 450 mm & 350 mm Casing/Screen Dia. = 300 mm & 200 mm Cement Grout = 15 meters Step-drawdown and Constant Discharge Test will be conducted after the completion of the Well Development activities (i.e. polyphosphate treatment, water jetting, surging/bailing and airlifting method)
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Php 3,594,000.00
Contract Duration	90 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary pass/fail criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation-A (IRR-A).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Eligibility Forms to Bidders with LOI	Feb. 8 - 20, 2007
2. Submission of Eligibility Requirements by bidders	February 9 - 27, 2007
3. Eligibility Screening Period	February 28 - March 7, 2007
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check	March 7, 2007
5. Issuance of Plans and Bid Documents	March 7 - 9, 2007
6. Pre-bid Conference	March 12, 2007; 9:00 A.M.
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	March 23, 2007; 9:00 A.M.

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms thru the BAC Secretariat c/o at the PWD Office of the General Manager, National Highway, Polomolok, South Cotabato, upon their submission of a LOI, and upon their payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 1,500.00 to the PWD Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,500.00 per package to the PWD Cashier.

The Polomolok Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) CECIL D. MIRASOL, M.E.
BAC Chairman

(PDI–Feb. 7, 2007)

SPORTSWATCH

Mariano is chess player of the month

MARIANO

GM NELSON MARIANO II WAS CHOSEN AS THE first ever "Chess Player of the Month" by the newly formed Chess Journalists Association of the Philippines. A former Asian junior champ, Mariano finished in a four-way tie for second place with three Vietnamese to emerge as the top Filipino finisher in the Asian Zonal held in Vietnam recently. The 34-year-old Mariano lost in the four-man playoff for the second and last zone qualifier to the Candidates Matches. National Master Emmanuel Senador, winner of the Rep. Pichay-Sinulog Open chess championship, finished runner-up. Composed of editors and sportswriters who cover the chess beat, the CJAP is headed by Ed Andaya of People's Tonight. The other CJAP officers are Roy Luarca of the INQUIRER and Dante Navarro of Philippine Star, vice presidents; Arman Armero of Standard Today, secretary; Joey Villar of Philippine Star, treasurer; Dani Simon of Police Files, auditor; and Noli Cruz of Manila Bulletin-Tempo and Cristine Moncada of Malaya, PROs.

8th RP Hobie Challenge off to Palawan

THE EIGHTH EDITION OF THE PHILIPPINE HOBIE CHALLENGE, ASIA'S PREmiere extreme sailing tournament, kicked off Saturday in Zambales for what is expected to be a close, tough race ending in Palawan on Feb. 10. Filipino sailors Jun Villanueva and Nestor Soriano of Team Mobile 1, fresh off their victory in the recent Hobie National Championships, are among the favored entries. Sixteen teams from the Philippines, Britain, the United States, Australia, Canada, Italy, Germany, Saipan and Fiji are vying for top honors in this year's regatta. The 400-kilometer race started at Isla Sta. Rosa in Sta. Cruz, Zambales, and will end at Club Paradise in Busuanga, Palawan.

Pacquiao heads int'l derby survivors

BOXING HERO MANNY PACQUIAO AND 86 OTHER SURVIVORS COLLIDE today in the semifinal round of Makati International 8-Cock Super Derby at the Makati Coliseum. Pacquiao, runner-up in the recent 2007 World Slasher Cup, will field anew imported fowls from Fresno, California, in the derby sponsored by San Miguel Beer, B-Meg Derby Ace and Casino Filipino-Heritage. The hard-earned victories of Pacquiao's Super Pacman II entry in Monday's opening round was followed by pairs of wins tallied by Richard Kelly of Alabama and Efren Canlas (Bacolor Gold), Raymond Velayo (Arnis Master) and Choi Moi Ngay of Vietnam (Selamat Datang), Gov. Joel Reyes and Jenjen Arayata (Super Clyde and Yce II) and Kabu Taniguchi and Boy Marzo (Sabongworld).

200 fights in Roligon finals today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP ROUND OF THE 17TH ANNIVERSARY 6-COCK DERBY kicks off at 10 a.m. today at Roligon Mega Cockpit in Parañaque with 200 fights on tap. A guaranteed prize pot of P4 million put up by host Toilly Ligon await the winners in the derby backed by Lakpue Drug Inc. and Thunderbird Enertone. Among the contenders are defending champions Ed Patawaran and James Uy, Ronnie Puno, Bobby Doromal, Allan Siaco, Pol Estrellado, Zaldy Alonsabe, Roger Parungao, Madison Go, Ronald Barandino of Basilan, Ed Moreno, Allan Que, Romy Sangalan and Eric Miranda. Roligon also presents the P2 million Largahan 5-Cock Derby on Feb. 22, 24, 26 and 28.

Red Bull, SMB seek finals slot

Guiao, Jarencio fined; suspension put on hold

GAME TODAY (*Araneta Coliseum*)
7 p.m.—Red Bull vs San Miguel

GUIAO: Fined P30,000

JARENCIO: P50,000

THE ODDS ARE ABOUT EVEN for two teams going into the winner-take-all semifinal match of the PBA Philippine Cup.

Even for a best-of-seven series that has adhered strictly to a trend, the numbers are dispensable now when Red Bull goes up against San Miguel Beer for the last finals berth at 7 p.m. today at the Araneta Coliseum.

The Barako are coming off a highly emotional and physical Game 6 win, 104-100, last Sunday and hope to seal a victory that will send them into a championship match against Barangay Ginebra.

The Kings took the first slot after closing out Talk 'N Text, 4-2, via a 98-89 Game 6 victory last Sunday.

The Barako bucked the ejection of head coach Yeng Guiao to tie the series at 3-3. Guiao was thrown out after flooring SMB's Dondon Hontiveros as the shifty shooter streaked down the sidelines after making a triple.

"I have to give a lot of credit to my coaching staff," said Guiao. "I think their winning percentage is so high that I feel like I'm not needed anymore. Credit to the boys also for vindicating me."

Guiao watched the remaining two quarters from the locker room. He was poised to spend four more quarters away from the bench because of the suspension slapped on him but got a reprieve from the Commissioner's Office.

"If a coach or a player has been ejected with two Ts (technical fouls), and one of those Ts has been considered to be flagrant misconduct during review, the offender will have to immediately serve the suspension," said technical chief Perry Martinez.

"But the commissioner (Noli Eala), taking into account the interest of Red Bull and its fans, and the importance of Wednesday's Game 7, opted to delay the serving of the suspension."

The incident enraged San Miguel Beer assistant mentor Pido Jarencio, who angrily confronted Guiao. Jarencio got away with only a technical foul even after shoving referee Mario Montiel.

Jarencio was slapped a P50,000 fine and Guiao a P30,000 penalty. Jarencio was also suspended and will serve out his punishment after Game 7.

The Beermen took Game 1 (114-109), Game 3 (109-82) and Game 5 (111-82), while the Barakos won Game 2 (106-84), Game 4 (109-107) and Game 6 (104-100).

Talk 'N Text guard Mark Cardona was also slapped a one-game suspension and fined P20,000 for kicking Ginebra's Ronald Tubid last Sunday. *Jasmine W. Payo*

Pacman fights again with Viloria in Texas

MANNY PACQUIAO HOLDS DEAR THE ALAMOdome in San Antonio, Texas.

It was in the cavernous arena that the Filipino superstar produced his most sensational triumph when he annihilated the heavily favored Mexican icon Marco Antonio Barrera in 11 rounds on Nov. 15, 2003.

Pacquiao will return to the San Antonio landmark on April 13 no longer an underdog but an overwhelming favorite, regardless of who he is going to face.

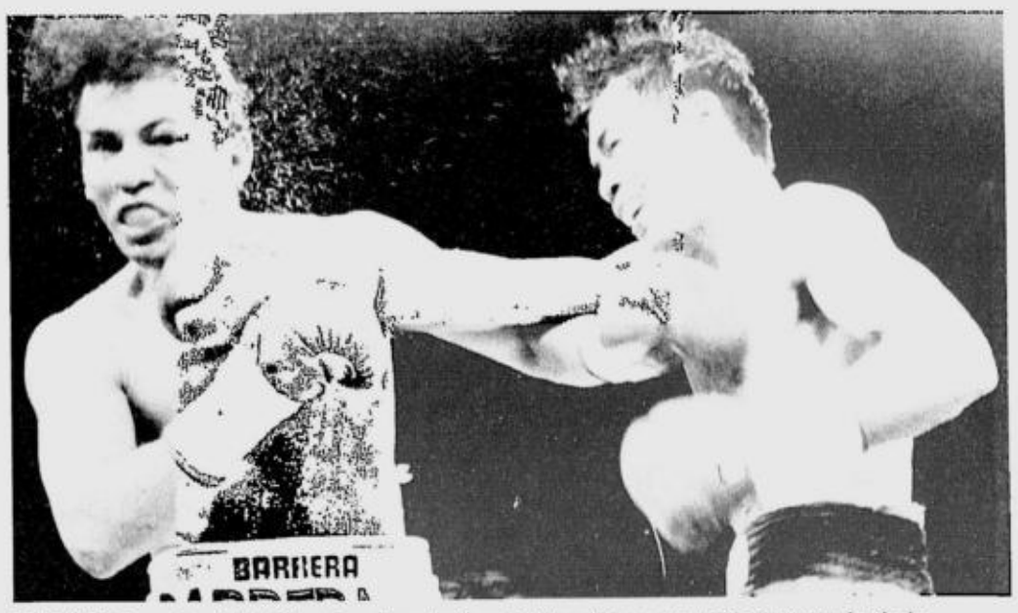
Tagged the world's best fighter in 2006, Pacquiao will be the main come-on in a big pay-per-view card, hatched by Top Rank promoter Bob Arum, that will also feature Fil-Am Brian Viloria, the No. 1 contender who will be trying to regain the WBC light flyweight crown against No. 2 Edgar Sosa of Mexico.

The crown was left vacant after Mexican Omar Nino, who wrested the crown from Viloria and then escaped with a majority draw in their second fight, was stripped of the title.

Nino was found positive for the banned substance methamphetamine by the Nevada State Athletic Commission. The finding was later confirmed by an independent laboratory from the University of California at Los Angeles.

For now, however, Arum's attention is focused on finding a suitable, reputable opponent for Pacquiao after the Filipino's original April 28 showdown with Korean Chi In-jin was pushed back to either October or November due to the non-availability of a suitable venue in Macau.

"Top Rank bossman Arum huddled Monday in his Las Vegas office with Pacquiao's lawyer Jing Gacal and they agreed that Pacquiao will next go to battle as the main event of a huge PPV show at the cavernous Alamodome in San Antonio," reported Boxingconfidential.



MANNY Pacquiao (right) lands a devastating right on Marco Antonio Barrera in their memorable November 2003 encounter at the Alamodome. REUTERS

Arum told Boxingconfidential that he has asked matchmaker Bruce Trampler to scout for a Mexican opponent for Pacquiao.

"Trampler is on the hunt right now for a good, solid Mexican fighter," Arum said. "Manny does not want any easy fights. That is not how Manny operates. I gave Bruce orders to get someone tough."

Arum said the venue switch was unavoidable. It came about not because Steve Wynn, owner of Wynn's hotel in Macau, was not ready but "because nearby hotels did not have the necessary capacity or were just not ready for the huge crowds" that were expected to see Pacquiao fight the Korean champion.

"We will do a Pacman fight at Steve's great resort sometime later," Arum said.

The promoter also said that among those who will be seeing action in the card is the charismatic Jorge Arce, who may take on WBC superflyweight king Cristian Mijares.

Also in the card is the undefeated Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., son and namesake of the legendary Mexican world champion.

Arum also indicated that Pacquiao will not be training in Puerto Rico with Oscar De la Hoya, apparently apprehensive that the Golden Boy and Pacman might get out of training camp as boxer-promoter with a new signed contract in hand. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*

Gerard, JR begin Pro-Am title defense

THEIR LAST VICTORY IN THE Konica Minota National Pro-Am was shaky to say the least. Now, buddies Gerard Cantada and JR Tanpinco will try to retain their title in a more convincing manner.

Renewing their partnership that had netted three straight championships since 2003, Cantada and Tanpinco will again lead a star-studded field teeing off at the Riviera's Langer in Silang, Cavite, today.

Cantada, a teaching pro at Wack Wack, went out of his way to have Tanpinco by his side again.

"I had to really convince him to plead to his school officials so that our team will remain intact, at least for another year," said Cantada of Tanpinco, who took a break from his studies at the San Diego Golf Academy in California. "Thank God, JR's teachers acceded."

The wide-bodied Cantada, whose ward Gerald Rosales ended up second in the recent Philippine Open won by Frankie Miñoza, and Tanpinco swept the last three editions of the fabled tournament which was revived in 2001 by U-Bix chair and CEO Edilberto B. Bravo.

Last year, however, Cantada and Tanpinco have to go through the wringer, rallying from four shots down in the last eight holes to nip the tandem of Richard Abariung and Marvin Dumandan by one stroke for the crown.

Noli Kempis and Erwin Vinluan won the 2001 revival tournament, followed by brothers Raul and Paul Miñoza in 2002 before Cantada and Tanpinco began their winning streak in 2003.

A brand-new Avanza, Toyota's latest model, will be dangled as a hole-in-one prize in the series ending Saturday.

A total of P1.7 million is up for grabs in the tournament adopting a one-ball twosome format. *Roy Luarca*

BEACH VOLLEY BABES: Volleybelles (from left) Roseanne Barroga, Maryann Calleja, Ma. Jane Christine Porcia, Ma. Lourdes Patilano and Sheena Rose Teves strike a pose as they are presented at yesterday's PSA Sports Forum at Pantalan Restaurant in Manila. The players plunge into action Feb. 8 and 9 in the Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball tournament at Clearwater Country Club in Clark Field, Pampanga. The competition's 2007 edition may include Filipino-Americans and a stop in either Cebu or Iloilo. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Finn tops 2 of 3 special Asian Formula 3 races

HENRI KARJALAINEN OF FINLAND SPED to two victories as Team Goddard, managed by Asian Formula Three director Mark Goddard, dominated the first three rounds of the AF3 Pacific Series recently at the Zhuhai International Circuit in Guangdong, China.

Karjalainen, who also saw action in last year's AF3 Circuit that held races in China, Indonesia and the Philippines, topped the qualifying race and went on to stamp his mark in the first two rounds. He seized the early lead in the drivers' standings with 42 points.

Briton Oliver Turvery, driving for Fujitsu Ten Racing with Threebond, finished second in the first two races and third in the last race, where Karjalainen crashed out, to also pool 42 points.

The Asia Pacific Series is being held to provide foreign drivers a training ground for the 2007 AF3 Circuit that will start in November.

Karjalainen and Turvery stood 12 points ahead of AF3 veteran Dillon Battistini of Britain who posted three fourth place finishes.

The opening three rounds of the series drew nine drivers, including Sweden's Philip Forsman and Austrian Walter Grubmuller of Aran Racing, Indonesian Moreno Soeprapto of Fujitsu, Paul Ip of Hong Kong who drove for Team Goddard, Briton James Littlejohn of Speedtech Asia and Briton Don Tacos of Team Goddard.

The next three rounds of the series are slated March 15-18 in Melbourne, Australia, as a support race for the Australian Formula One.

DB-Makati five nips DB-Manda for Tangkad Sagad cage crown

CEDRIC UMALI AND JOHN RYAN GLIMTANG hit pressure-packed free throws in the shoot-out stage, shoving Don Bosco-Makati past Don Bosco-Mandaluyong, 26-24, to capture the Cherifer Tangkad Sagad Basketball Tournament Sunday at the Marikina Sports Park gym.

Umali and Glimtang preserved the game-long brilliance of John Paolo Dauz who top-scored with 12 points for the Makati dribblers of coach Terrence Baclig in the 12-under 5-on-5 title clash.

The two teams forged the shoot-out after the regulation period had ended at 24-all.

Jesart Ocampo led the Mandaluyong squad of mentor Glen Docsie Faldas with 11 markers.

In the semifinal round of hoopfest supported by Adidas, Don Bosco-Makati edged Marist School, 21-18, while Don Bosco-Mandaluyong ousted International Christian School, 23-18.

On hand to award the trophies and medals to the winners were Cherifer product manager Tom Meneses, tournament director Edmundo "Ato" Badolato, Bernard Ocampo and other Cherifer officials.

23rd Mango Tee unfurls at Alabang

ACCI president Johnny Castillo hits the ceremonial drive as former President Ramos (right) looks on.

THE HUNT FOR FOUR MITSUBISHI cars, golf carts and other major items at stake as hole-in-one and tournament prizes in the Mango Tee Invitational starts today with the first batch of players teeing off at the Alabang Country Club.

Lucky ace makers in the 36-hole tournament co-presented by Pilipinas Shell and Smart Communications and spread over five days will drive home a Lancer 2.0 GT and Yamaha cart up for grabs on the sixth hole, an L200 Strada GLX and a Club Car on No. 8, a Galant 240m and a Golf Cruiser on the 12th and a Grandis 2.4 AT on the 15th from Mitsubishi Motors and Citimotors.

These are on top of a Yamaha cart, a 32-inch LCD television, golf items, appliances and airline tickets worth more than P1 million that will be raffled off during the awards ceremony on Sunday.

Former president Fidel V. Ramos, ACCI president Johnny Castillo and Mango Tee committee chair Ed Lacson head the big cast of members seeing action.

Also playing are Finance Secretary Gary Teves, Transportation Secretary and NGAP president Leandro Mendoza, National Treasurer Omar Cruz, Shell president Ed Chua, FedEx president Bert Lina, and Federation Golf president Ogie Manalo.

Ramos and 16 other sponsors and VIPs hit the ceremonial drives Tuesday to formally open the tournament. Evening cocktails will be held for the duration of the competition, according to general manager Cynthia Matias.

To be disputed are the low gross and low net plums and the top awards in four handicap divisions. Shotgun tee-offs are set at 6:15 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

First Gent Golf Cup fires off Feb. 27

FOUR FOUNDATIONS WILL BENEFIT FROM the First Gentleman Invitational Golf Tournament slated Feb. 27 at the Wack Wack Golf and Country Club in Mandaluyong City.

The fund-raising tournament is organized for the fourth time in five years by the First Gentleman's Foundation, Inc. of lawyer Jose Miguel "Mike" Arroyo.

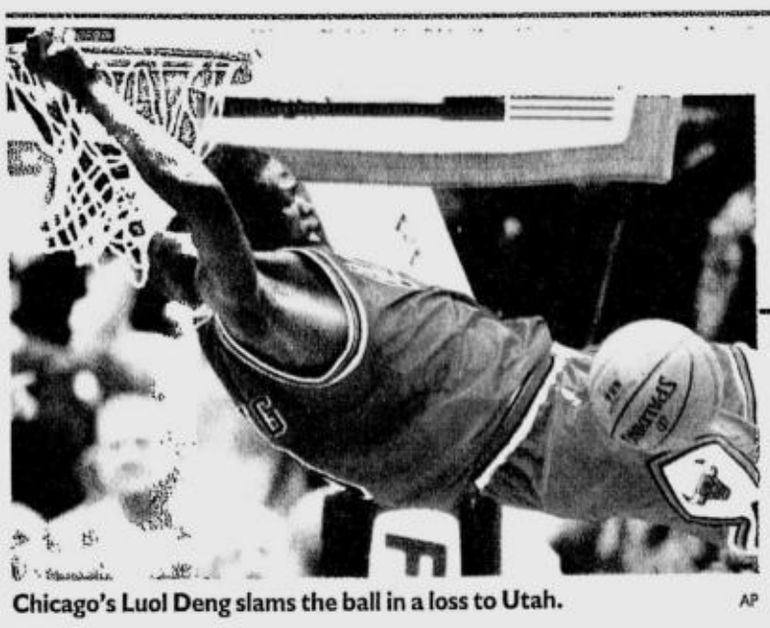
The four beneficiaries, personally selected by Arroyo, are the Philippine Bamboo Foundation, Lyric Opera Foundation Philippines, Rotary Club of Makati Central Foundation, and the Alay sa Kawal Foundation.

The tournament seeks to bring together golf enthusiasts from the government and private sector. Coordinating preparations for the event is the FG Cup Secretariat headed by Edgardo C. Manda and Benjamin V. Ramos.

ARROYO

The Alay sa Kapwa Foundation extends help to soldiers and other military members and their families, while the Rotary Club of Makati Central Foundation supports social, civic and economic activities that improve the plight of the disadvantaged and impoverished sectors of society.

SPORTS



Chicago's Luol Deng slams the ball in a loss to Utah. AP

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Shaq's back, powers Heat against Bobcats

MIAMI—DWYANE WADE scored 27 points and Shaquille O'Neal had his best scoring performance since returning from knee surgery to lead the Miami Heat to a 113-93 victory over the Charlotte Bobcats on Monday night.

O'Neal, who missed 32 games, hit his first four shots and scored 19 first-half points on 9-of-10 shooting. He finished with 22 points and was one of six players in double figures.

The Heat played without point guard Gary Payton, suspended by the league following his ejection for arguing with officials during Saturday's win at Milwaukee. Rookie Chris Quinn made his first career start and finished with 14 points.

Raymond Felton scored 20 points, and Emeka Okafor and Gerald Wallace each scored 19 for the Bobcats.

In other games, it was LA Lakers 90, Atlanta 83; Golden State 113, Indiana 98; Washington 118, Seattle 108; Philadelphia 100, New Jersey 98, OT; Houston 105, Minnesota 77; Phoenix 113, Denver 108; Utah 100, Chicago 95; Sacramento 105, New Orleans 99

Meanwhile, New York's Nate Robinson will defend his title at the NBA All-Star Slam Dunk contest against three first-time entrants, the league announced Monday.

Boston's Gerald Green, Orlando's Dwight Howard and Chicago's Tyrus Thomas will also compete for the crown February 17 at Las Vegas in the annual showdown of high-leaping, wild-spinning acrobatic jams into baskets.

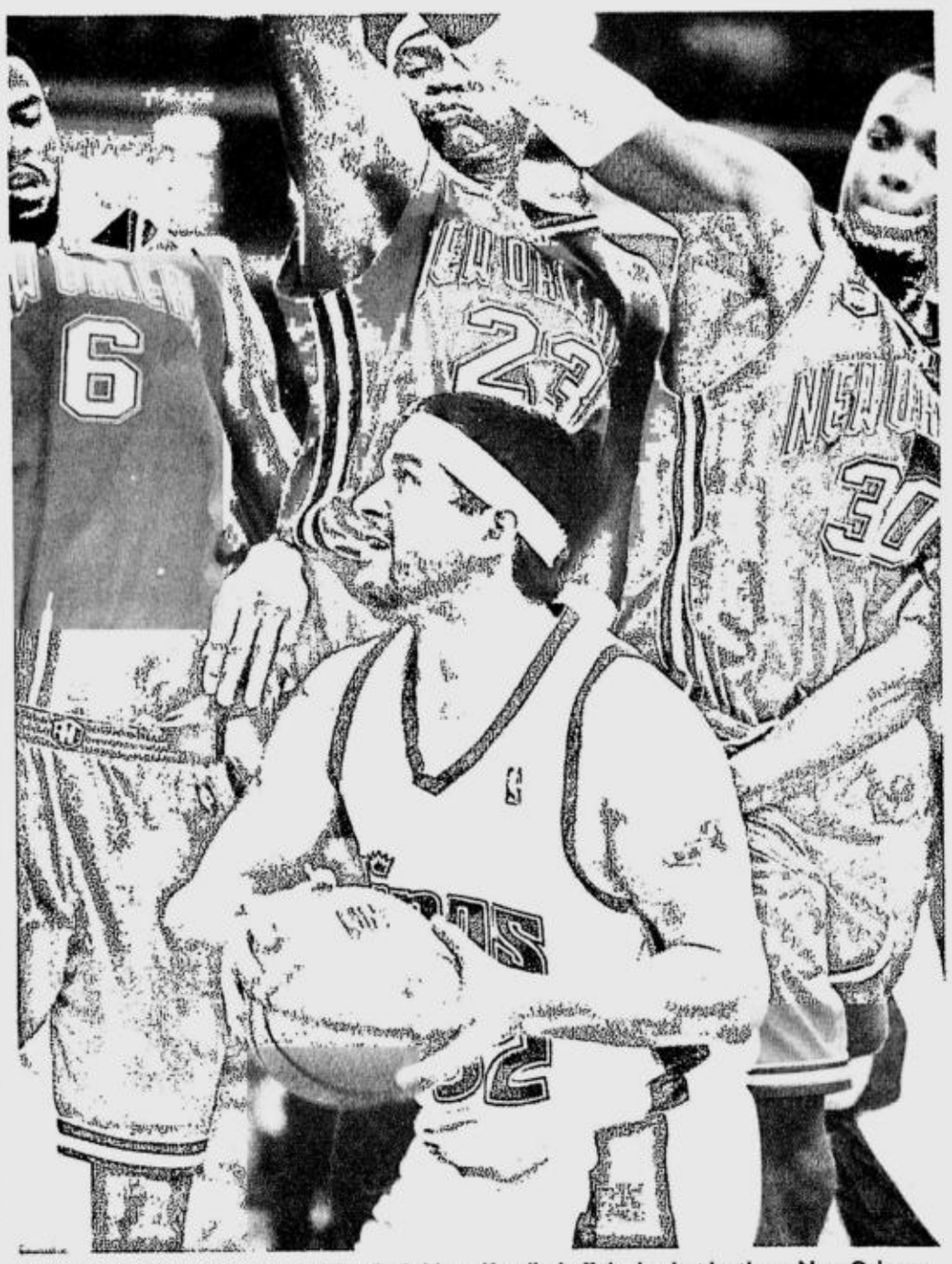
The dunk contest comes on the eve of the 56th NBA All-Star Game at the Nevada gambling mecca.

Many of the league's top stars have elected not to compete in the event in recent years, diminishing the impact of an event whose past winners include Michael Jordan, Kobe Bryant, Vince Carter and Dominique Wilkins. *AP*

NBA TODAY ON BASKETBALL TV

8:30 a.m.—Boston vs Detroit (replay at 6 p.m.)

11 a.m.—Houston vs Memphis (replay at 9:30 p.m.)



SACRAMENTO center Brad Miller finds himself walled off the basket by three New Orleans defenders. The Kings defeated the Hornets, 105-99. AP

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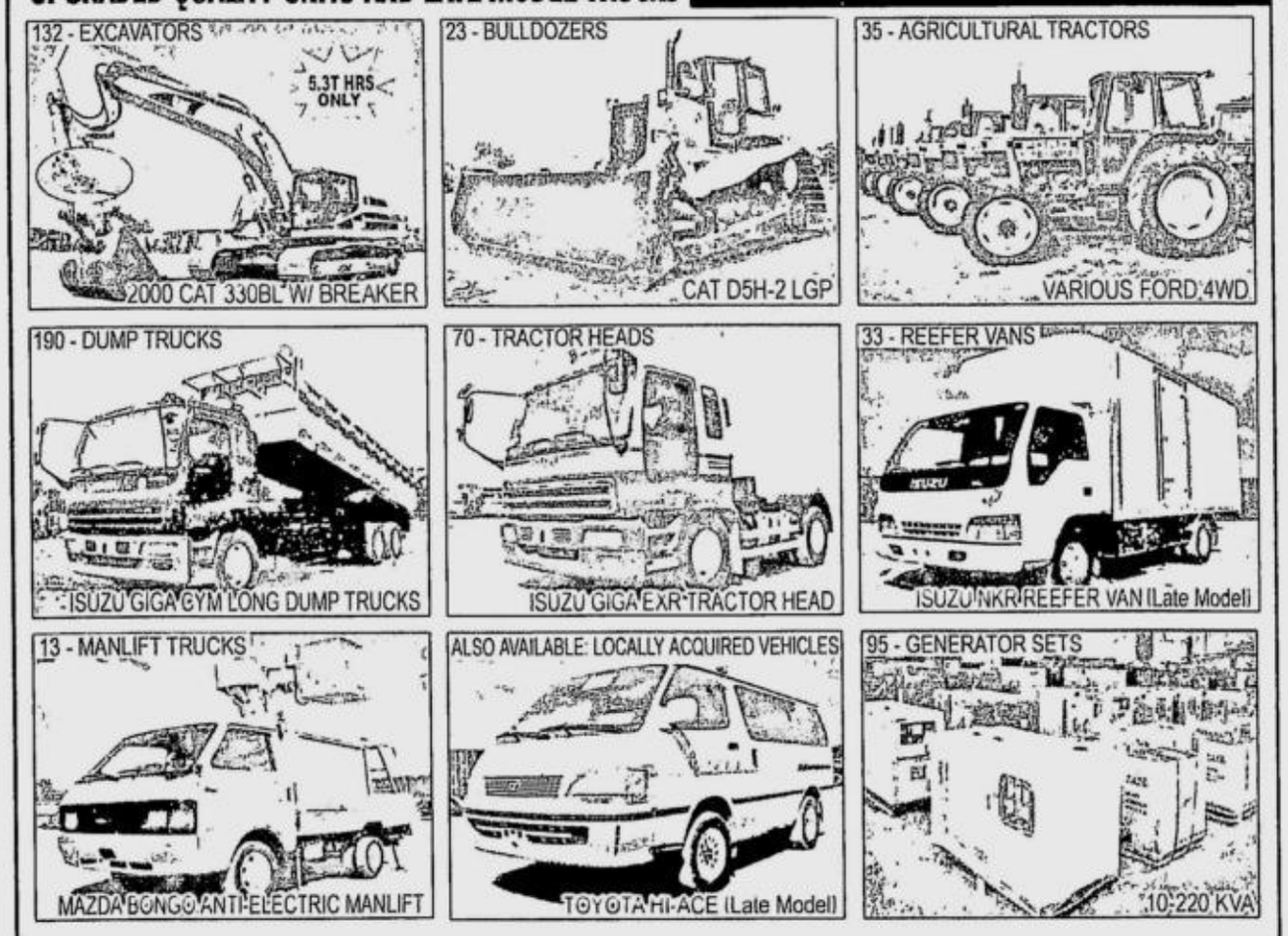

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Henin feels it's time to move forward, sets tennis comeback

PARIS—JUSTINE HENIN REFUSED TO TALK about her marital split but said here Monday that she was just glad to be getting back on the tennis court.

Henin has not played since the WTA Championships in Madrid in November, where she downed Maria Sharapova in the final to take over the world No. 1. She missed last month's Australian Open due to personal reasons, later revealed to be the split from husband Pierre-Yves Hardenne.

She will make her competitive comeback later in the week and Henin was adamant the only thing she wanted to talk about was her tennis.

"This has been a hard time, a painful time but all I want to talk about is my tennis," said the 24-year-old Belgian, currently number two in the world behind Australian Open finalist Sharapova.

"We all go through hard times and this will stay our secret, that's our right and I ask you to accept it.

"I'm very happy to be back here (in Paris) and competing again. There are things that I'll keep to myself."

Henin followed the Australian Open from afar and returned to training during the first Grand Slam of the season, where she had reached the final in 2006.

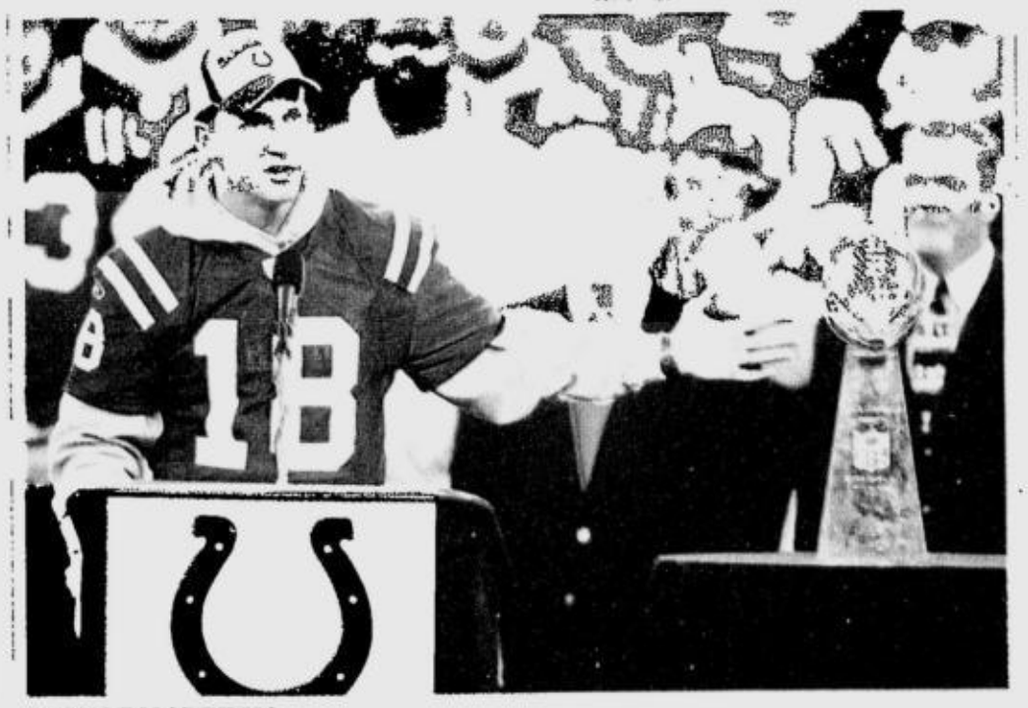
She was initially planning a return to action at Dubai in two weeks time but said she felt that would have kept her out of the game for too long.

"I started training again during the Australian Open. I wanted to see how it was going. It was too long to wait for Dubai so when I had the chance of coming to Paris, I thought I have to get back into it."

Henin enjoyed her best season ever in 2006, reaching 10 finals from 13 tournaments—winning six—and reaching all four Grand Slam finals, winning in Roland Garos for the third time before also claiming the end of season Championships.

And she is keen to continue in that rich vein, even though her season has started badly, losing top spot in the world, missing the first month of competition and drained by personal and emotional issues.

But she still has a lot of ambition left and is determined to pick up one title that has always eluded her. *AFP*



VICTORY SPEECH

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Peyton Manning addresses the crowd during a victory rally in Indianapolis that celebrated the team's Super Bowl triumph. The Colts defeated the Chicago Bears to win Super Bowl XLI. AP PHOTO

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BUSINESS

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Inflation eased further to 3.9% in January

Lowest since Nov. '03

By Michelle V. Remo

CONSUMER PRICES ROSE 3.9 PERCENT LAST month from a year ago, the slowest inflation rate since November 2003, as all commodities except clothing recorded a decelerated increase in prices.

The January rate was the low-end of the 3.9- to 4.6-percent forecast made by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. Last December, the inflation rate stood at 4.3 percent.

"The 3.9-percent inflation rate further confirms a benign inflation outlook. It provides additional flexibility for monetary policy," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. told reporters.

In the Jan. 25 meeting of the policy-making Monetary Board, the BSP decided to maintain its key policy rate at 7.5 percent in the belief there was no substantial inflationary pressure that should merit a higher interest rate.

The BSP uses its key policy rate as a tool to control inflation. An increase in its borrowing rate encourages banks to deposit more of their funds in the central bank, thus reducing money in circulation. In return, this results in a tempered growth in demand for commodities and slows inflation down.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that the annual inflation rate for food, beverage and tobacco decelerated to

INFLATION/ B4

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo reacts in apology as she prematurely rings the bell while Francis Lim, president of the Philippine Stock Exchange. and Vice President Noli de Castro look on during the listing ceremony of additional stocks of Filinvest Corp. and bell ringing at the PSE in Makati City. EDWIN BACASMAS

Peso rallies to 48.50 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

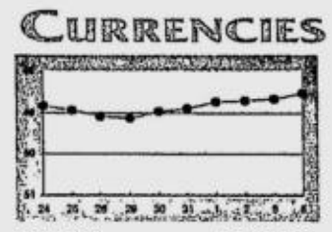
THE PESO YESTERDAY RALLIED to a six-year high of 48.50 before closing at 48.505 against the dollar as Asian currencies were boosted by expectations that this week's G7 meeting of the world's richest nations will prompt Japan to address concerns on the yen's weakness.

The peso, now trading at its strongest level since hitting 48.44 on March 20, 2001, yesterday gained another 20.5 centavos from Monday's closing of 48.71 to the dollar. Volume at the spot foreign exchange market Philippine Deal-

PESO/ B4

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



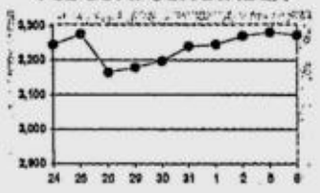
PESO-DOLLAR RATE

₱ 48.505 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 6, 2007

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B4)

Shares close lower

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 0.30-PERCENT lower yesterday as investors locked-in profits after the key index returned to its highest level in almost 10 years, dealers said.

They said blue-chips Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. (PLDT) and Ayala Land led decliners as market participants chose to wait for the release of corporate earnings before buying more shares.

SHARES/ B4

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Treasury unit offers P50-B bond swap /B2

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Treasury unit offers ₱50-B bond swap

With the offer, gov't hopes to provide bond market with better benchmarks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF THE TREASURY YESTERday offered another bond swap to existing holders of domestically issued Treasury bonds.

In a statement, the BTr said investors holding various outstanding government securities that would mature anytime between March 1, 2007 and Feb. 21, 2012 are invited to exchange these for either the new 3-year or 5-year benchmark bonds.

The BTr said the swap would run until Feb. 15.

National Treasurer Omar Cruz said participation in the bond swap was voluntary. Terms of the bond swap, such as interest rate to be imposed on the new bonds, will be determined by a separate auction for the 3- and 5-year new bonds.

The BTr said it was hoping to swap P30 billion worth of new 3-year bonds, and P20 billion for the fresh 5-year bonds.

The swap is part of the country's debt consolidation program which was started last year. One aim is to provide the bond market with better benchmarks.

Also, under a bond swap, the government is able to stretch the average maturity of its debts and reduce the cost of its borrowings.

A swap stretches the average maturity of the government's debts because an investor who holds a government security, one that will mature in a few months for instance, is invited to swap this for a new 3- or 5-year bond.

The last bond swap was said to have stretched the average maturity of the government's debts by 4.7 years.

A swap reduces the government's borrowing cost because the fresh bonds usually have slightly lower interest rates than the rates imposed on the old bonds. The BTr said the government saved P18 billion last year due to lower-than-expected borrowing cost resulting from the bond swaps.

Cruz said a bond swap benefits investors because it boosts activity and liquidity in the domestic capital market. Those who hold fresh bonds, considered as benchmark bonds, are able to sell these instruments easier in the secondary market.

The swap helps boosts liquidity because the fresh 3-year bonds, for instance, that will be swapped by the government will be issued under one series. Therefore, old government securities that had been issued under different series would now fall under one series.

"The 3-year and 5-year maturities are viewed as important reference points to provide suitable and credible benchmarks for corporate issuances," Cruz said in the statement. "Liquid benchmarks on the whole augur well for the market, given the current levels of overall domestic liquidity and limited volume of supply."

The BTr said Credit Suisse First Boston would still be the government's financial arranger for the bond swap. *With a report from Reuters*

More foreign funds seen to flow to RP mine sector

By Christine A. Gaylican

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN the country's mining sector next year is expected to reach $1.6 billion as more projects advance to the production stage, government and industry officials said.

The world's fourth-largest copper producer Xstrata Plc this year will more than triple its investments to $348 million, and further increase their investments fourfold in 2008, said Horacio Ramos, director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, which is a unit of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The bulk of the investments coming in next year will be spent by Xstrata on its Tampakan copper project, Ramos said.

The Switzerland-based company last month acquired Australian company Indophil Resources NL's Philippine unit, which has rights to mine Southeast Asia's biggest untapped copper deposit in South Cotabato.

Developing the mine may cost as much as $1.4 billion, Indophil said in a recent disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange.

"The mining boom will start this year," DENR Secretary Angelo Reyes said, adding that this would even grow in 2008.

Mining investments in 2006 totaled $109 million, the Mines Bureau data showed.

Another mining project in the pipeline is Australia's Oceana Gold Ltd, which took over Climax Mining Ltd.'s mineral claims in the Didipio copper-gold mine in Nueva Vizcaya. Oceana Gold said last month it would spend $100 million in building an open-pit mine and processing plant.

Ramos also cited the production of Atlas Mining Consolidated and Development Corp. after it completed the $100-million rehabilitation of its Toledo mine in Cebu, which used to be the biggest coal mine in East Asia.

RP steps up export to 4 nations

THE VOLUME OF PHILIPPINE exports to the world's growth engines—Brazil, Russia, India and China—are steadily rising, as local firms recognize the huge potential of their booming economies, according to accounting and tax advisory firm Punongbayan & Araullo.

Also known as the BRIC countries, the four countries are the fastest growing economies worldwide, and are expected to collectively account for 44 percent of global output by 2050.

Citing results of a latest survey by Grant Thornton International, of which P&A is a member, the firm said exports to the BRIC countries showed a strong rebound as the proportion of businesses exporting rose to 36 percent, equaling that year's global average.

P&A said the jump in Philippine export volumes was second only to those of Hong Kong, whose shipments are mainly sent to mainland China and India.

Grant Thornton's yearly International Business Report, formerly known as the International Business Owners Survey, covered medium to large private enterprises based in the Philippines, starting in 2004 when results showed that 33 percent of local enterprises surveyed reported that they do export, slightly below the global average of 35 percent.

In 2005, the Philippines placed significantly below the global average as the proportion of exporting businesses dropped to 26 percent. That year, the Philippines placed third in the bottom five countries with businesses exporting.

P&A managing partner and chief executive Greg Navarro said local businesses were maintaining the steady climb, as this year's results indicated that the Philippines is consistently placing in the top five exporters to the BRIC countries.

Ronnel W. Domingo

Coco yield seen to slide this year

By Ronnel W. Domingo

DOMESTIC OUTPUT OF COconut is expected to slide by 8.9 percent this year due to a series of strong typhoons that ravaged producing regions in the latter part of 2006, according to the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines.

The industry umbrella group also said export volumes were seen to decline by 18.9 percent, with substantial reduction in shipments of the sector's major exports such as coconut oil, copra meal and desiccated coconut.

Ucap estimated the yield in 2007 at 2.24 million metric tons in copra terms. Total output last year was expected to have reached 2.46 million MT.

"Much of the decline in production would be observed in the second half of this year, particularly during the last quarter," the group said.

At the same time, aggregate cargoes of major coconut-based products might only reach only 1.653 million MT from an estimated total volume of 2.04 million MT in 2006.

Shipments of coconut oil was projected to reach 750,000 MT. Export of desiccated coconut is expected to hit 105,000 MT.

Ucap said the industry was anticipating a tight supply of husked nuts, which are the main material used by desiccators. Bicol, parts of Southern Tagalog and the Visayas were the hardest hit regions last year.

Last December, the Philippine Coconut Authority reported that some 196,000 coconut farmers lost about P714.4 million in damaged coconut trees due to Typhoon Reming that ravaged southern Luzon in late November 2006.

PCA data show that some 42.64 million coconut trees were damaged, most of which were in the Bicol region.

The agency further reported that 33.9 million or 79.5 percent of the affected trees were those in the Bicol region. This represents about a tenth of the country's 330 million coconut bearing trees.

PCA said that about 1.3 million trees were "totally damaged," while about a quarter of the total—some 11.2 million trees—were "heavily damaged."

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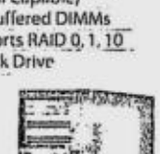

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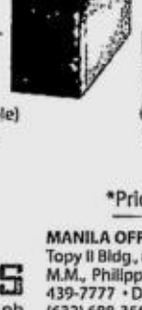

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Gov't spent ₱13.81B in subsidies to state-owned firms

2006 level up 12.8% from previous year's ₱12.23B

By Michelle V. Remo

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT SPENT P13.81 billion in 2006 as subsidies to state-owned firms, or 12.8 percent more than the P12.23 billion it allocated to public corporations the previous year.

The growing state subsidies to government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), which ideally should be self-supporting, was the reason the Department of Finance wanted to implement measures to improve their financial performance.

The government provides subsidies to state-owned firms to support their operations and services that could not be accommodated due to cash shortages in a given period.

Documents from the DOF showed that the five biggest recipients of government subsidies in 2006 were: Philhealth, P2.87 billion; Land Bank of the Philippines, P1.92 billion; National Electrification Administration (NEA), P1.59 billion; National Housing Authority (NHA), P1.47 billion, and National Food Authority (NFA), P910 million.

There were 32 other state-owned firms that received subsidies from the government last year.

The five biggest recipients of state subsidy last year were the same as in 2005. Subsidies granted to Landbank, however, were used to to implement the government's agrarian reform program, which the state-owned bank is tasked to oversee.

Finance Secretary Margarito Teves said the DOF had planned to establish a scorecard system for GOCCs. Under the plan, state-owned firms will be asked to set performance targets, such as on revenue generation. Those who will meet their respective targets will be granted incentives, while those who will fall short of the goals may be subjected to reorganization.

Teves, however, admitted that the national government was unable to implement the scorecard system last year as it was preoccupied with improving its own fiscal performance. He said the DOF wanted to start the use of scorecards for state-owned firms this year.

The proposal to establish a formal system of evaluating state-owned companies was raised during the time the national government's own fiscal position was unhealthy, worsened by the subsidies granted to underperforming GOCCs.

Teves earlier said that undertaking reforms for selected GOCCs, especially the NFA, currently the biggest losing state-owned firm, should be urgently implemented.

One proposed measure for the NFA was to privatize one of its core functions—the trading of imported rice—and just allow it to carry on its regulatory role.

The NFA is mandated to import rice to cover for shortages in local supply and thus prevent surges in the price of rice. The NFA likewise regulates importation by rice traders.

Explaining its losses, the NFA earlier said these were a natural consequence of its mandate to ensure steady supply and low cost of rice. To perform its mandate, the NFA is often forced to import rice and sell at a lower cost.

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Filinvest allots ₱5B for capex

Nearly ₱6B raised through listing of additional shares yesterday

By Daxim L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED FILINVEST LAND INC. plans to more than treble its spending on new projects this year as it tries to maximize gains from the ongoing real estate boom.

In a briefing, Filinvest Land president Joseph M. Yap said the total capital expenditure for 2007 would reach P5 billion.

"Of this amount, P3.5 billion will be for residential projects, while P1.5 billion will be for BPO (business process outsourcing) and office projects," he said.

Last year, the firm allotted only P1.5 billion for capex—a relatively conservative stance compared to other developers such as Ayala Land Inc., Megaworld Properties and Robinsons Land Corp.

In the firm's residential property business, up to 14 new projects spanning the entire range of housing types are planned for launch this year, he said.

Filinvest Land's aggressive expansion comes on the heels of yesterday's listing of additional 5.4 billion shares by the company. This exercise succeeded in raising P5.92 billion from a combination of foreign and local investors.

The company's share price yesterday hit P1.82 per share, or 13.75 percent higher than its offer price of P1.60 per share. Trading was heavy, with P1.1 billion worth of Filinvest Land shares changing hands.

Yap said the demand for housing products of the Gotianun-owned firm are being driven mainly by overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) or their beneficiaries.

"Between 40 percent and 50 percent of our sales are from OFWs and their families," he said, adding that he was expecting this level of demand to persist over the foreseeable future as the country continues to export more labor.

At present, the firm has an estimated 2,200 hectares in its land bank, of which 1,800 hectares are located in the busy Calabarzon area. The firm holds a 677-hectare property in Rizal province to the east of Metro Manila. Yap also said the firm was planning to further increase its portfolio of properties that deliver recurring income such as mall and office space.

Globe to spend $360M for new, existing services

By Riza T. Olchondra

GLOBE TELECOM INC. IS SETTING ASIDE $350 million for capital expenditure this year, chief financial officer Delfin C. Gonzalez Jr. said at the company's stockholders meeting yesterday.

Delfin said about $190 million would go to infrastructure investments "in new growth areas" such as 3G and Internet services. The remaining $160 million will be spent for the expansion and improvement of the telco's core 2G network.

Globe closed 2006 with a 14-percent growth in net income to P11.8 billion from P10.3 billion in 2005.

The Ayala-owned telco also said it had posted a 4-percent growth in its consolidated service revenues to reach P57 billion.

"The sustained growth in service revenues together with effective cost management measures drove double digit growth in earnings, with Ebitda (earnings before taxes, depreciation and amortization) and Ebit ending the year at P37.2 and P20.1 billion, respectively. Ebitda margin remained healthy at 65-percent despite a seasonal rise in marketing spend in the last quarter," Globe said in a report said.

For 2006, the company said it had recorded a 26-percent growth in its SIM base, with significant net addition of 1.2 million in the last quarter to boost its SIM base to 15.7 million at year end. Touch Mobile continued to be a major driver of growth, marking the year with a 57-percent year-on-year growth to reach 4.9 million subscribers.

Among Globe's new offerings are the Globe Kababayan and Kabalikat remittance programs for overseas Filipino communities.

Globe also launched recently the Chubun IDD phone card—a co-branded IDD card that allows Filipinos in Japan to call Globe and TM subscribers at discounted rates. Following the launch of its co-branded prepaid SIMs with Singtel and Taiwan Mobile, Globe did a similar launch with CSL to provide overseas Filipinos in Hong Kong access to discounted Globe and TM call and text rates.

"We started the year with strong first quarter performance and we are pleased that we were able to maintain that positive momentum forward, bringing 2006 to a very good close," Globe president and CEO Gerardo C. Ablaza Jr. said.

Court junks Bayantel petition

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE SUPREME COURT HAS DISMISSED the petition of Bayan Telecommunications Inc. seeking the suspension of the required public offering of its common stocks, saying the company should have first brought the matter to the National Telecommunications Commission.

The high tribunal upheld the decision of the Pasig City regional trial court in 2000 and the 2003 resolution of the Court of Appeals that the Lopez-owned Bayantel failed to state a cause of action when it filed a petition for declaratory relief against the NTC.

Republic Act 7925, the law that governs the telecommunication industry, requires telcos to make available for public ownership 30 of their aggregate common stocks within five years from the effectivity of the law or the start of the concerned company's operations, whichever comes later.

However, Bayantel sought the suspension of its public offering. It claimed that the market situation was not conducive to a successful public offering. Also, the company said that with its poor financial and that it should be exempted from the requirement. The high tribunal did not rule on whether the company was exempted from the rule.

In going to the SC, Bayantel said there was a controversy needing judicial determination because it would face NTC sanctions if it failed to comply with RA 7925.

The telecommunications firm said it was exempted from the rule of exhaustion of administrative remedies since there was no administrative review provided by the law and that the NTC did not have the power to decide whether the law was valid or not.

Bayantel also said applying the rule on it would bring about disastrous results for the company, and that the impossibility of compliance excused it from the required public offering.

The NTC, however, countered that the provision was clear and unambiguous, and that there was no need for judicial interpretation. The agency also said Bayantel's apprehension of being sanctioned was conjectural and anticipatory since there were no implementing guidelines governing the implementation of the public offering requirement.

Exchange to legalize 'short selling' soon

THE PREVIOUSLY TABOO PRACtice of short selling will soon be legalized once the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) puts in place rules for its securities borrowing and lending (SBL) program.

In a statement, the PSE said stock market investors "can now enjoy the sophistication of trading on borrowed stocks, adopt new trading strategies, earn extra income from the new tack and inject more activity to the market."

Under the scheme, equity market investors can profit even when prices are falling by borrowing idle stock inventory, selling them, buying them back at a cheaper price, and returning the same number of shares to the original owner.

Investors can then pocket the difference in the stock price, paying a small interest charge for borrowing the idle stocks from its owners.

Local regulators insist on calling the practice SBL—although it is universally known as "short selling"—mainly because of previous negative experiences associated with it.

According to the PSE, short selling became possible after concerned government regulators approved and put in place all the rules and regulations necessary.

"The introduction of SBL adds to our market the sophistication that investors find in other advanced markets abroad," PSE president and CEO Francis Lim said. "But more than that, SBL will bring additional business to, and assure the growth of, our stock market."

Advanced stock markets like the New York Stock Exchange as well as large Asian markets have long allowed the practice of short selling, mainly because the practice acts as a vent for deflating overvalued share prices.

SBL's introduction comes two years after the PSE intensified efforts to introduce this product as part of a plan to expand the market's menu of products and services, the exchange said. *Daxim L. Lucas*

PSALM preparing for bidding of 2 coal-fired power plants

By Abigail L. Ho

UNDETERRED BY THE FAILURE OF THE National Transmission Corp. concession bidding, Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM) has lined up two big-ticket coal-fired generation facilities for auction within the year.

PSALM vice president for asset management and electricity trading Froilan Tampinco said it was planning to rebid National Power Corp.'s Masinloc and Calaca power plants, both rated at 600 megawatts (MW), by the second half.

The rebidding, however, would only take place when both plants had at least 60-70 percent of their dependable capacity covered by power supply contracts, he said.

Both plants had already been auctioned off in the past, with Masinloc even declared sold to YNN Pacific Consortium Inc.

The Calaca plant went through two failed auctions, while the asset purchase agreement between PSALM and YNN for the Masinloc plant had to be terminated when the winning bidder failed to remit the $227-million 40-percent down payment for the plant.

PSALM failed to privatize both plants due to a common reason: The lack of power supply contracts attached to them.

DISCLOSURES

GLOBE Telecom Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on March 28, 2:30 p.m. at the Grand Ballroom of InterContinental Manila in Makati City.

***

SAN MIGUEL CORP. said it was reorganizing the operations of The San Miguel Philharmonic Orchestra and the San Miguel Master Chorale to be more effective and cost efficient.

***

CONSTANTINO, Guadalquiver and Co. has been appointed external auditor of **Active Alliance Inc.**

***

FIL-ESTATE Corp. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on March 20, 8:30 a.m. at the Edsa Shangri-La Plaza Hotel in Mandaluyong City.

***

JUSTICE Jose C. Vitug has tendered his resignation as chair of the market integrity board of the **Philippine Stock Exchange.** ***Compiled by Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research***

Inflation . . . From page B1

4.3 percent in January from 4.7 percent in December; housing and repairs, to 2.9 percent from 3.7 percent; fuel, light and water, to 4.7 percent from 5.4 percent; services, to 3.7 percent from 4.4 percent; and miscellaneous items, to 2.4 percent from 2.5 percent.

Inflation rate for clothing settled at 3 percent in January, registering the same pace as that in December.

"This (slowdown in inflation) will further support greater economic resilience, help advance financial reforms and strengthen market confidence," Tetangco added.

Economic officials said a decelerating inflation helps encourage consumer spending and corporate investments, therefore boosting economic growth.

The National Economic and Development Authority earlier said inflation for the rest of 2007 was expected to be benign given the projected slowdown in increase in global oil prices and continued strengthening of the peso.

A stronger peso helps makes imported goods cheaper, therefore tempering the increase in consumer prices.

Shares close lower

The composite index fell 9.93 points to 3,271.97 after trading between 3,265.15 and 3,308.58 points. There were 6.2 billion shares traded worth P1 billion.

Losers outnumbered gainers 66 to 39, while 54 stocks ended unchanged.

The broader all-share index was down 2.83 points at 2,061.18.

"The market is consolidating," said Chelsea Dipasupil of RCBC Securities. "It's a healthy correction since some stocks are already over-

Peso rallies . . .

ing System also swelled to $524.2 million yesterday from the previous day's $257.3 million.

Other currencies in the region, especially the Malaysian ringgit, Indonesian rupiah, Singapore dollar and Korean won also benefited from the yen's strong gains.

"It's partly due to pressure from the western countries on Japan that the yen is artificially weak, so if Japan will do something about it, the regional currencies will follow," said Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. senior

From page B1

bought after the recent run-ups."

Lawrence de Leon, an analyst at Accord Capital Equities, said that after a six-day rally, investors decided to cash in on their gains.

"The correction could continue in the next few sessions, especially as investors await more corporate results," he said.

But dealers believe the market's uptrend remains intact, backed by hopes the economy will continue expanding this year amid low interest rates and tame inflation. *AFP*

From page B1

vice president Marcelo Ayes.

Ayes added that foreign inflows continued to pour into the country. He also noted that there was some room for the peso to further gain against the dollar as the local currency was still trading at a discount to the 48.45:$1 quoted by offshore traders for non-deliverable forwards (contracts to buy or sell for future settlement) as of yesterday.

The banker said the peso could next test the 48.30-40 level in the next few days.

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Feb. 6, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	7.9	8.2	7.8	8	627,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	55	55.5	54	54.5	2,841,800
Bank of the Phil. Islands	72	72.5	71	71.5	1,727,500
China Banking Corp.	750	760	750	750	72,300
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.5	1,620,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	98	98	97	97.5	228,800
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	62	62	60.5	61	6,653,800
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	51	52	51	52	2,500
Philippine National Bank	46.5	46.5	46.5	46.5	119,600
Phil. Savings Bank	55	56	55	56	20,300
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	44.5	45.5	44	44	726,900
Security Bank Corp.	78	78.5	78	78.5	81,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	62	63	62	62.5	65,700
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	7,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.1	195,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	32	32	32	32	10,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1650	1650	1650	1650	100
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	406,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	490	490	470	470	9,880
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2090	2100	2090	2100	880
Ivantage Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.64	1.64	491,000
INDUSTRIAL ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.4	5.5	5.2	5.3	45,184,000
First Gen Corp.	59	59	58	58	698,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	77	77	76	76	627,000
Manila Electric Co. A	73	73	71.5	71.5	334,900
Manila Electric Co. B	73	73	71.5	71.5	1,669,300
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.9	9.9	9.5	9.9	10,598,000
Petron Corp.	4.75	4.8	4.6	4.65	11,675,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.28	0.28	0.28	0.28	100,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.2	1.24	1.2	1.24	369,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.5	24.5	24.25	24.25	50,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	44.5	44.5	44	44	791,200
RFM Corp.	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.42	1,380,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.85	2.85	2.8	2.8	394,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.49	0.51	0.47	0.47	2,640,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	64	64	85,000
San Miguel Corp. B	77	78.5	77	78.5	526,200
Tanduay Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	6,000
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.06	2.1	2.02	2.02	1,358,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18	18.25	18	18.25	3,644,700
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.5	1.5	1.42	1.44	34,057,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.85	4.85	4.7	4.75	609,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.4	3.4	3.4	3.4	50,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8.1	8.2	8.1	8.1	6,138,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.3	1,019,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.2	5.3	5.1	5.2	4,734,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Picop Resources Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.27	34,460,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	199,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	95,000,000
Ayala Corp.	665	680	655	660	100,530
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.2	8.2	8	8.1	7,718,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	11	11	8.9	8.9	66,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.065	0.0675	0.0625	0.065	64,800,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	166,000
APC Group Inc.	0.39	0.41	0.39	0.4	16,930,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	71,400,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.24	1.28	1.22	1.24	14,488,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	65,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.55	3.55	3.55	60,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	26,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.35	3.35	3.25	3.25	24,819,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.6	7.6	7.4	7.4	500,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	5.7	5.7	5.4	5.4	7,269,000
F&J Princ.E Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	100,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	110,000
House Of Investments Inc.	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.4	1,294,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	379,500
Medco Holdings	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	1,600,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	4.95	5.3	4.95	5.1	2,389,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.94	1.96	1.9	1.9	3,185,000
Pacifica	0.019	0.019	0.019	0.019	5,000,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	200,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.56	1.58	1.56	1.58	139,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.73	0.73	0.72	0.72	400,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	21,200,000
SM Investments Corp.	390	407.5	387.5	402.5	419,610
South China Resources Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.06	1.08	230,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	25,000
Vivant Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	3,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.145	0.145	0.14	0.14	1,910,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	17.5	17.75	17	17.25	17,886,100
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	220,000
Belle Corp.	1.22	1.3	1.22	1.28	11,336,000
A Brown Company Inc.	1.4	1.48	1.4	1.44	6,450,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.48	0.49	0.48	0.48	3,260,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	913,000
C & P Homes Inc.	1.98	2.12	1.96	1.96	3,401,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.32	0.32	0.31	0.31	610,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.79	0.79	0.76	0.76	37,000,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.66	1.62	1.64	412,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	3,000,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.8	1.92	1.8	1.82	602,698,000
Gotesco Land Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	250,000
Interport Res.	0.01	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	34,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.01	202,000,000
Keppel Phils. Prop. Inc.	1.7	1.72	1.7	1.72	71,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.53	0.54	0.51	0.51	3,220,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.85	0.85	0.84	0.84	5,960,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.023	0.023	0.02	0.02	4,600,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. B	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	600,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.8	2.85	2.75	2.75	36,046,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	5.2	5.2	5	5	223,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	1,170,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	150,000
Polar Property Holdings	2.18	2.18	2.14	2.14	52,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	17.75	17.75	17.5	17.75	15,389,800
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.66	0.68	0.66	0.66	5,830,000
SM Development Corp.	3.8	3.85	3.6	3.6	8,294,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.75	12.25	12.5	7,509,400
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.67	0.67	0.62	0.62	620,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	100,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.25	23.5	23	23	253,100
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	110,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2.02	2.02	1.98	2	12,011,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1410	1415	1400	1405	56,940
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	7.1	7.2	7	7.2	8,178,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2565	2575	2555	2560	83,480
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.33	0.36	0.33	0.35	34,220,000
Ionics Inc.	2.7	2.75	2.7	2.7	460,000
IPVG Corp.	4.05	4.4	4.05	4.2	2,811,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.0625	0.055	0.0575	33,800,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	1,900,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.34	1.36	1.32	1.36	82,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.36	2.4	2.28	2.3	1,886,000
Philweb Corp.	0.035	0.036	0.035	0.036	389,700,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.15	4.15	4.1	4.1	212,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	25	26	24.75	25.5	2,672,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	0.98	0.99	0.98	0.99	200,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.3	2.32	2.22	2.24	3,434,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.35	0.35	300,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.67	0.75	0.67	0.7	7,770,000
EDUCATION					
iPeople Inc.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	200,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.1	2.12	1,999,000
Paxys Inc.	24.25	24.25	24	24	557,200
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.5	537,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	172,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	90,600,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.6	9.7	9.3	9.3	1,262,000
Benguet Corp. A	12.5	12.5	11.75	12	110,400
Geograce Res. Phil. Inc.	0.84	0.88	0.84	0.86	80,640,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.27	43,790,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co. B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,740,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.025	390,600,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.029	0.029	108,600,000
Omico Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	233,700,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4.1	4.1	3.95	4	5,580,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	19	19	18.5	18.5	240,400
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.8	0.8	0.79	0.79	2,930,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.46	1.54	1.46	1.5	2,503,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	2,450,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	409,800,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	11,000,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.011	0.011	124,100,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	33,200

CURRENCIES

February 6, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.773216	1.000000	48.7130
Japan	Yen	0.006426	0.008311	0.4049
United Kingdom	Pound	1.515735	1.960300	95.4921
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.099021	0.128064	6.2384
Switzerland	Franc	0.619316	0.800961	39.0172
Canada	Dollar	0.654325	0.846238	41.2228
Singapore	Dollar	0.504117	0.651975	31.7597
Australia	Dollar	0.599718	0.775615	37.7825
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.051134	2.652731	129.2225
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.206163	0.266631	12.9884
Brunei	Dollar	0.502480	0.649857	31.6565
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000110	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022445	0.029028	1.4140
UAE	Dirham	0.210565	0.272324	13.2657
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.293300	63.0005
Korea	Won	0.000827	0.001069	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.099630	0.128851	6.2767
Argentina	Peso	0.249626	0.322841	15.7266
Brazil	Real	0.369394	0.477737	23.2720
Denmark	Kroner	0.134132	0.173473	8.4504
India	Rupee	0.017561	0.022712	1.1064
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220919	0.285714	13.9180
Mexico	New Peso	0.070856	0.091638	4.4640
New Zealand	Dollar	0.527576	0.682314	33.2376
South Africa	Rand	0.107571	0.139121	6.7770
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023496	0.030387	1.4802

Source: REUTERS' FOREX CLOSING PRICES as of NY Time—Feb 5, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian Time Closing Rate as of 05-Feb-07

Cebu Pacific lowers seat prices

Airline offers ₱999 fare for Asia routes

By Riza T. Olchondra

CEBU PACIFIC (CEB) HAS STARTED OFFERING P999 one-way fares for most of its Asian routes.

The prices will be applicable to Manila-Singapore, Cebu-Singapore, Manila-Bangkok, Manila-Jakarta and Manila-Kuala Lumpur flights from Feb. 7 to Feb. 13, 2007.

The travel period is from Feb. 21 to May 31, 2007.

"This is for immediate payment upon booking, (and) the best way to grab the promo is via CEB's website, www.cebupacificair.com," marketing director Candice Iyog said in a statement. "It's fast and easy to book flights and pay fares online."

Iyog added that the P999 fare is for one-way travel only. It is non-refundable and is exclusive of regular surcharges and government tax.

Iyog said that the sale is meant to jumpstart the summer season.

"This is part of CEB's efforts to stimulate the market and grow the tourism industry with the lowest fares possible," she said. "It has always been CEB's mission to bring flying closer to more Filipinos."

The P999 sale is available for limited seats on the following regional services: daily flights between Manila and Singapore; six-times weekly flights between Cebu and Singapore; four-times weekly flights between Manila and Bangkok; thrice-weekly flights between Manila and Jakarta; and four-times weekly flights between Manila and Kuala Lumpur.

In addition to the regional seat sale, Cebu Pacific is gearing up for this year's summer season by opening new domestic, inter-island routes, namely thrice-weekly flights between Cebu and Puerto Princesa starting Feb. 22, as well as four-times weekly flights between Cebu and Kalibo, beginning March 7.

Now in its 11th year, Cebu Pacific has the newest fleet in the Philippines.

At present, the budget airline operates 13 brand new Airbus aircraft to its 20 domestic and seven regional destinations.

Cebu Pacific is awaiting the delivery of one more Airbus aircraft in March 2007 to complete its $670-million re-fleeting program.

PNR employees get retirement perks

AFTER YEARS OF WAITING, about 1,600 employees of Philippine National Railways will finally receive their retirement benefits.

This was jointly announced by PNR general manager Jose Ma. I. Sarasola II and Government Service Insurance System president Winston Garcia after they signed a memorandum of agreement covering the payment of some P859 million in PNR employee premiums that went unremitted for the past 20 years.

As provided for in the agreement, P859 million was released to the GSIS last month—part of the P1 billion which the Department of Budget and Management earmarked for the settlement of the railway company's financial liabilities.

Sarasola said that with this development, PNR now may put its finances in order.

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Free snacks and gifts for the first 30 guests.
Brokers, sales agents, businessmen and professionals are all WELCOME to attend.

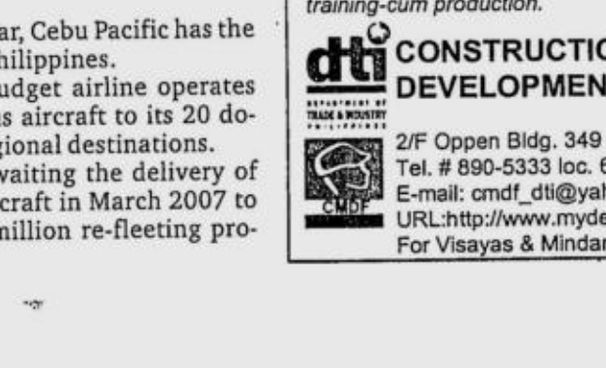
Woodsville VIVERDE mansions
Merville, Parañaque

Your Family's First Condo.

Discover Woodsville Viverde Mansions.

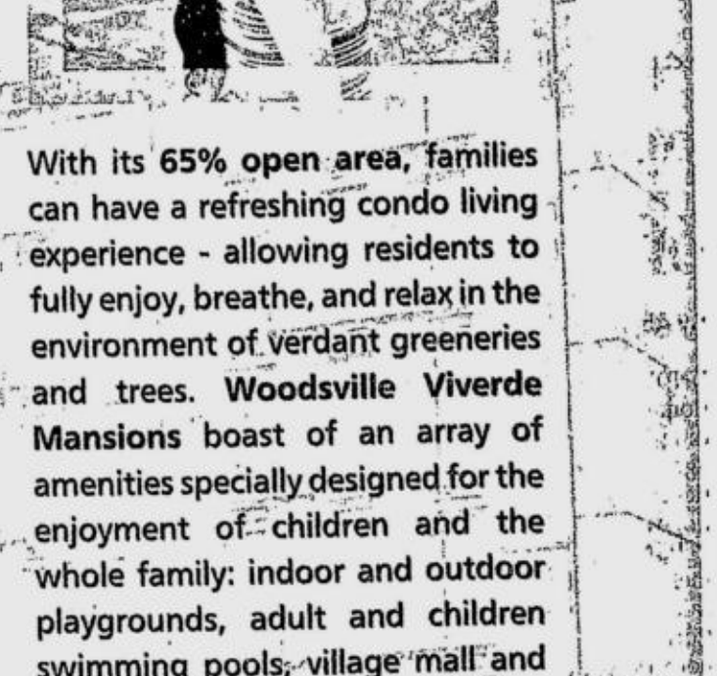
Enjoy an inspiring family life in the newest urban community to rise in south of Makati.

Only 10 minutes away from the bustling Ayala Avenue, Woodsville Viverde Mansions is strategically located between Merville and Bicutan interchanges.



Actual Picture of Model Unit

With its 65% open area, families can have a refreshing condo living experience - allowing residents to fully enjoy, breathe, and relax in the environment of verdant greeneries and trees. Woodsville Viverde Mansions boast of an array of amenities specially designed for the enjoyment of children and the whole family: indoor and outdoor playgrounds, adult and children swimming pools, village mall and much more.



Units are affordably available in 2 or 3-bedroom models. For as low as Php24,000 a month for a 2-BR unit.

To know more about Woodsville Viverde Mansions, please call 636-0888 or 0922-8380888.

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The Property Developer of Choice

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Mitesh Kumar Parekh	Functional Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Ankush Vithalrao Shejul	Functional Analyst
EVERLAND THEME PARK DEVELOPMENT CORP. Rm. 38 Elena Bldg., 512 Salas cor. Adriatico Sts., Ermita, Manila	Jae One Jung	Operations Manager
GENPACT SERVICES LLC Plaza A, Northgate Cyberzone, Filinvest Corporate City Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Kavita Vasant	Assistant Manager
CHARMING AESTHETIC INC. Unit 4, Capricorn Bldg., Monserrat St., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Soonsook Kwon (w/o Choi)	General Manager
NICE ACADEMY INSTITUTE INCORPORATED 233 Aguirre Ave., BF Homes, Parañaque City	Seong Hwi Ryu	Marketing Manager
KINO CONSUMER PHILIPPINES, INC. Unit 304, 3/F, La Fuerza Plaza, 2241 Chino Roces Ave., Makati City	Wijaya Chandra	Brand Manager
GENERAL ELECTRIC PHILIPPINES, INC. 2291 Don Chino Roces Ave. Ext., Makati City	Dennis Michael Cooke	Project Manager
JAESUNG CORPORATION U/1102 Atlanta Center, #31 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila	Heung Jae Noh	General Manager
JAESUNG CORPORATION U/1102 Atlanta Center, #31 Annapolis St., Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila	Dae Sung Kim	Sales Manager
SEOHAN INDUSTRIES (SH) CORPORATION #14 Basilan St., Philam Homes Village, Quezon City	Hyo-Seob Yoon	Assistant Finance Manager
SEOHAN INDUSTRIES (SH) CORPORATION #14 Basilan St., Philam Homes Village, Quezon City	Byung Hun Nam	Finance Manager
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Yatin Ashok Tamhane	Functional Analyst
MAERSK GLOBAL SERVICE CENTRES (PHILIPPINES), LTD. 17/F Wynsum Corporate Plaza, Emerald Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Erik Moller Nielsen	Managing Director
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Dipen Ashwin Mehta	Functional Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Deep Chakrabarti	Functional Analyst
YEOHAENG-SKETCH TOURS & TRAVEL INC. Acre Bldg., #137 Malakas, Quezon City	Byeong Cheol Baek	Operation Manager
JAK MARINE CARE, INC. 2/F Markatmic Bdg., 8428 Dr. A. Santos Ave., Brgy. BF Homes, Parañaque City	Byungryul An	Owner's Representative
ASAHI GLASS PHILIPPINES, INC. M.H. Del Pilar St., Brgy. Pinagbuhatan, Pasig City	Naohiko Irino	Head-Logistics & Warehouse
TETS 05 INT'L. CORP. 908 Medical Plaza, San Miguel Ave., Ortigas, Pasig City	Junsung Min	Corporate Treasurer
OSM SHIPPING PHILS., INC. 8428 Markatmic Bldg., Dr. A. Santos Ave., Parañaque City	Bokyoung Kim	Korean Business Translator
WAXI TRADING LTD. CO. #3 G/F 619 Asuncion St., Binondo, Manila	Zhiyun Chen	Technical Consultant

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–February 7, 2007)

APOLOGY

ROXAS ENTERPRISES OF ISABELA APOLOGIZES FOR SELLING COUNTERFEIT URATEX FOAM PRODUCTS

ROXAS ENTERPRISES, with retail store located at Centro Roxas, Isabela, sincerely apologizes to **Polyfoam-RGC International Corporation**, the registered owner of the trademark **URATEX**, and to the buying public for selling counterfeit **URATEX** foam mattresses bearing fake **URATEX** labels/stickers.

ROXAS ENTERPRISES admits that its unauthorized use of the trademark **URATEX** is a criminal activity that constitutes trademark infringement and unfair competition punishable under the Revised Penal Code and the Intellectual Property Code punishable by imprisonment ranging from 2 to 5 years plus a fine ranging from Php50,000.00 to Php200,000.00; and that it has caused great damage to **Polyfoam-RGC International Corp.** and to the public who were deceived into buying his goods thinking that they were genuine **URATEX** products. **URATEX** mattresses and foam products are well-known for their high quality and reasonable price.

ROXAS ENTERPRISES pledges and undertakes immediately to completely stop using the trademark **URATEX** and to withdraw and destroy goods which falsely use the trademark **URATEX**. It also promises not to commit the same acts of infringement and unfair competition again.

ROXAS ENTERPRISES:

By: JIMMY TAN
Owner and General Manager

(PDI–February 7, 2007)

Republika ng Pilipinas
PAMBANSANG PANGASIWAAN NG PATUBIG
(National Irrigation Administration)
Bancasi, Butuan City

INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION

Date: January 25, 2007
Loan No. 1668-PH: Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project
Contract No. SPISP-LCB-CTN-04,05,06,07,08,09 and 10

(Local Competitive Bidding)

1. The Government of the Republic of the Philippines has received a loan from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) towards the cost of Southern Philippines Irrigation Sector Project (SPISP) and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of this loan to eligible payments under the contract for which this invitation for Prequalification is issued.
2. The National Irrigation Administration (NIA) intends to prequalify firms for the Construction/Rehabilitation of Canlilan NIS. Main/Lateral Canals and Appurtenant Structures based on the above mentioned separate contract packages. The scope of contract per package are expected to be as follows:

Work Item	Estimated Quantity Packages						
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
a. Canal Excavation, cu.m.	1,330	750	900	700	-	155	180
b. Canal Embankment Fill, cu.m.	9,700	11,900	6,700	12,250	-	4,740	8,200
c. Concrete Works w/ RSB, cu.m.	500	450	700	360	350	840	740
d. Plain Concrete, cu.m.	660	350	360	740	-	-	290
e. Rock Excavation, cu.m.	-	-	-	-	390	-	-
f. Plain/Grouted Riprap, cu.m.					440		
g. Structure Excavation, cu.m.					3,040		
h. Cofferdamming, cu.m.					4,160		
i. Sluice Steel Gate, asst.					1		
j. Intake Steel Gate, assy.	-	-			2		

3. It is expected that notices of prequalification will be made on March, 2007.
4. Interested eligible applicants may obtain further information from the NIA-Region 13 CARAGA and inspect the Prequalification Documents at the address given below during workdays from 0800 hours to 1700 hours Philippine Standard Time.
5. The prequalification forms in English language, may be purchased by an interested applicant upon submission of Letter of Intent clearly starting "Application for Prequalification for Contract No: SPISP-LCB-CTN-04,05,06,07,08,09 and 10 and payment of a non-refundable fee of Php 2,500.00 per contract package not later than 1700 hours, Philippine Time February 20, 2007. The Letter of Intent shall be addressed as follows:

The Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee
c/o ENGR. MEDEL P. MAWILE
Brgy. Bancasi, Butuan City, Philippines
Tel. No. 085-342-3000
Facsimile No. 085-342-5353

6. Submission of Application for Prequalification, consisting of one (1) original and three (3) copies must be received in sealed envelopes either delivered by hand or by registered mail to the above address on or before March 7, 2007, 1700 hours Philippine Standards Time. The envelopes must be clearly marked "Application for Prequalification for Contract No. SPISP-LCB-CTN-04,05,06,07,08,09 and 10.
7. The NIA, reserves the right to accept or reject late applications.
8. The NIA will not be responsible for any costs or expenses incurred by Applicants in connection with the preparation or delivery of their Applications
9. The NIA will notify all Applicants in writing of results of evaluation of their applications for prequalification.

(Sgd.) MEDEL P. MAWILE
BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) DEMOCRATICO P. GRANA, JR., CESO V
Regional Manager

(PDI–Jan. 31 & Feb. 7, 2007)

National Irrigation Administration
Region VI, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

Contract Ref. No. NIARS-NDC-J5RIS-CW02-0
Name of Contract: Rehabilitation of Jalaur RIS
Location: Pototan, Iloilo

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The National Irrigation Administration, Region VI, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites contractors registered with and classified by the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) to apply for Eligibility and if found eligible, to bid for the hereunder Contract:

Name of Contract	: **Rehabilitation of Jalaur Suague RIS**
Location	: Pototan, Iloilo
Brief Description	: Road Surfacing and Mechanized Desilting
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	: Php7,688,855.10
Contract Duration	: 90 Calendar Days

Prospective bidders should possess a valid PCAB License applicable to the contract, have completed a similar contract with a value of at least 50% of the ABC, and have key personnel and equipment (listed in the Eligibility Forms) available for the prosecution of the contract. The BAC will use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria in the Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids. The BAC will conduct Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The schedule of BAC activities is as follows:

BAC Activities	Schedule		
	Time	Date	Venue
1. Receipt from prospective Bidders of Letters of Intent (LOI) including Application for Eligibility	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Feb. 7-21 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
2. Issuance of Eligibility Forms	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Feb. 7-21, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
3. Deadline of Receipt of Eligibility Requirements	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Feb. 21, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
4. Notice of Results of Eligibility Check		Feb. 26, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
5. Issuance of Bid Documents	8:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Feb. 26-Mar. 5, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
6. Pre-bid Conference	10:15 AM	Mar. 1, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City
7. Receipt and Opening of Bids	10:15 AM	Mar. 13, 2007	NIA R6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City

The BAC will issue to prospective bidders Eligibility Forms at the National Irrigation Regional Office 6, Bonifacio Drive, Iloilo City, upon submission of Letter of Intent (LOI) and upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php1,000.00 to the NIA Region VI Cashier. Prospective bidders shall submit the Eligibility Requirements to the BAC at the said address. They may also obtain the results of the Eligibility Check by the BAC at the same address.

The BAC will issue Bidding Documents only to bidders declared by the BAC to be eligible for the bidding upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php3,000.00 to the National Irrigation Administration Region VI Cashier.

The National Irrigation Administration assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bids.

The National Irrigation Administration reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved:
(Sgd.) OLIVER A. CERVANTES
BAC Chairman

(PDI–February 7, 2007)

PNOC-ENERGY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
Energy Complex, Merritt Road
Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No. 893-1320, Local 5279

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND BID

The PNOC-Energy Development Corporation is inviting all interested suppliers to apply and submit sealed bids for the supply and delivery of the following:

Various Sizes of Long Radius Elbows under FGJ 60708
Approved Budget PHP 11,200,000.00

Eligibility forms and bidding documents shall be available for issuance at the above address c/o **Eloisa J. Hufana** starting **February 7, 2007**, and upon payment of a non-refundable fee of PHP 400.00 per document.

For purposes of clarifying certain matters, a pre-bidding conference shall be held on **February 15, 2007, 2:00 p.m.** at the above address.

Applications for eligibility and sealed bids shall be submitted to, and registered with the PNOC-EDC Supply, Property and Materials Management Division at the above address, and thereafter, dropped in the padlocked bid box thereat not later than **2:00 p.m. (Supply Management's Office Wall Clock Time) of February 28, 2007**. Public opening of bids shall follow immediately thereafter. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

Prospective bidders shall signify conformance to the bidding terms and conditions, as required, and shall ensure the same through proper submission/execution. Source of funding is from Internal Cash Generation of PNOC-EDC. All bids should be within the Approved Budget for the Contract in order to qualify.

PNOC-Energy Development Corporation reserves the right to annul the bidding process, to reject any or all bids, to waive any informality in the bids received and to accept such bid which is most advantageous to PNOC-EDC without thereby incurring liability to the affected bidder or bidders or any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the ground(s) for PNOC-EDC's action.

Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee I

(PDI–Feb. 7, 2007)

AROMIN & SY + ASSOCIATES, INC.
is in need of the following:

CIVIL ENGINEERS who are interested to pursue a career in **STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING DESIGN**, Male or Female w/:
* Good Scholastic Record (pref. Honor Students or Board Placer) * Computer Literate

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY
* A Bachelor's degree in any field
* Female, not more than 30 years old
* Proficient in MS applications
* With pleasing personality
* Good in oral and written English
* Sec. skills: Typing, Filing, Office Procedures

AROMIN & SY + ASSOCIATES, INC.
U-504 Pryce Center, 1179 Chino Roces Ave.
cor. Bagtikan St., Makati City
8969704-05 / E-mail: arominsy@info.com.ph

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BEST OFFER IN TOWN
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887-2888 loc 3544

Notice is hereby given that the Estate of deceased Lumen Melad was Extra judicially settled be her sole heir Evangelina G. Dela Cruz per Doc. No. 29 Page No. 07, Book No. 35, Series of 2007 of N. P. Carlos D. Maninang, Guagua Pampanga
(PDI - Feb. 7, 14 & 21, 2007)

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By distributing basic goods: Purefoods, SMC, Magnolia, Coca-Cola, Fundador, Ho-mi, Org. Rice, Knorr, etc...
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Agencia de Makati
Tel# 889-7956

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STELLA MARIS HOMECOMING
Photo shown are (standing from left): Cecilia Hernando-Jimenez, Sr. Sonia Punzalan, Virginia Buencamino-Mendoza, Annabelle Castañeda-Quiazon, Edna Ella Camongol, Rowena Diñoso-Tolosa, Aida Ng-Ramirez, Josefina Tayag-Balbido, Fidela Soiano-Rosario, Adelaida Tan-Valdez and Julita Rausa-Papasin during the Stella Maris homecoming held on January 14.

Our Beloved

Benjamin "Jojo" V. Abella

Joined his Creator on January 15, 2007
in Los Angeles, California.

He is son to **Hermes CB. Abella, Sr.** & **Melba Vuelban Abella** (†); brother to **Tess** & **Boy Azcona, Beth** & **Manny Boy Lopez, Hermes "Rocky", Jr.** & **Bernadette Abella, Marissa** & **Ed de Joya**; uncle to **Michelle, Katrina, Tanya, Joseph, Martin, Melissa** & **Matthew**.

His remains will be in Christ the King Chapel C, Green Meadows, Quezon City tomorrow, February 8, 2007.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 10, 2007 at the Christ the King Crypt, after the 3:00 p.m. Mass.

Happiness comes not from having much to live on,
But having much to live for...

Our Dearly Beloved

GLORIA ROA CATRAL

Now rests in the infinite warmth and embrace of our Lord. She has joined our Creator on February 6, 2007 at the age of 87.

We, who remain, give thanks for the lifetime she was allowed to share with us.

Her remains lie in Manila Memorial Park - La Funeraria Paz, Sucat from February 6, 2007 - February 8, 2007 then, her remains will be transferred to Alcala, Cagayan by February 8, 2007.

Interment will be announced.

Our Dearly Beloved

Heidi Roces Arboleda

Peacefully joined our Lord on February 5, 2007 at the age of 65.

Her brothers and sister **Cecilio, Nilda, Justino, Nestor** and **Manuel**, their spouses and children, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for her eternal repose and happiness. She will join her parents and deceased brothers and sisters.

Her remains will lie in state at Chapel-8, La Funeraria Paz, G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City. A Memorial Service will be held on Friday, February 9, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. Her ashes will be brought to her residence in Quezon City before bringing it to Guinobatan, Albay.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS: ❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)
WE ACCEPT CREDIT CARDS and bank-to-bank payments.

Message of Thanks

We, the bereaved family of the late

NORBERTO T. ESCALONA

who peacefully joined his Creator on January 8, 2007 at the age of 71

sincerely convey our deepest gratitude to all those who attended the novena and Holy Masses, offered prayers, Mass cards and flowers, visited and kept vigil, attended the funeral rites, and who in many ways, condoled and comforted us in the hour of our bereavement.

Your kind expression of sympathy during our moment of sorrow shall always be remembered.

In loving memory of the late

Jose P. Gonzales, Sr.

(Gapan City)

who joined his Creator on February 4, 2007

and was survived by

his wife, *Adriana D. Gonzales*

His Sons and Daughters and In-Laws

Virgilio (†) *and Elida*
Danilo and Encarnacion
Nonilon and Elvie
Estrellita and Danilo
Adelina and Nilo
Pastora and Santos
Jose Jr. and Corazon
Cornelio and Loida

Brothers and Sisters

Dr. Modesta G. Boquiren
(Former DepEd-NCR Director)
Benedicto Sr. (†)
Rosalina
Cecilio Jr.
Juanito (†)

Nieces, nephews and grandchildren

Interment will be on February 8, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at Gapan Memorial Park.

GLORIA GUBALLA-SY

of Bocaue, Bulacan

Joined her Creator on February 3, 2007 at the age of 77.

Her husband **German**; children **Vivian, Irene** and **Dino**; siblings **Pilar, Msgr. Martin, Avelino** and **Gloria, Paulina** & **Skai, Susan** & **David**, nephews and nieces request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at their residence, #033 M.H. del Pilar St., Bagumbayan, Bocaue, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Saturday, February 10, 2007 at the Bocaue Catholic Cemetery after the 2:00 p.m. Mass.

ALEXANDER MARCIANO MANOOS

of Mogpog, Marinduque and Novaliches, Quezon City.

Passed away on January 31, 2007 at the age of 66.

His bereaved wife, Caring; children, Ruby, Arnel and Mercy, Ariel and Pinky, Arlene; grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nephews, nieces and other relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Manoos residence, Block 5, Lot 30, St. James Street, San Pedro Subd. 7, San Bartolome, Novaliches, Quezon City.

Interment shall follow after the 9:00 Mass on February 8, 2007 at the Manila Memorial Park (Holy Cross) Novaliches, Quezon City.

CLASSIFIEDS

Zen Meditation

BUDDHIST SCRIPTURES STATE THAT "ZEN is the mind of the Buddha." The teaching of Zen is the teaching of Buddha's enlightenment. By attending Zen class, we can learn the right method of meditation, the ways to solve the difficult problems in our lives and thereby gain true wisdom and peace of mind.

The key to enlightenment is by reflecting inward into our own minds and attaining unbiased perception of reality. Practicing this way, we will be able to bring forth our inherent nature, turn ignorance into wisdom and perfectly attain Buddhahood.

Ocean Sky Chan Monastery, one of the branches of Chung Tai Chan Monastery in Taiwan, has been in the Little Baguio of San Juan for 4 years and we follow the pace of Founding Abbot, Grand master Wei-Chueh, in spreading Buddha's teaching. Ocean Sky Chan Monastery has English and Chinese Zen Classes for beginners, and also the intermediate, the advanced and the Sutra Studying classes, and we hold lots of Dharma Ceremonies for all sentient beings every month. In order to apply the essence of Chan (Zen) in daily lives, Ocean Sky Chan Monastery proposes the Four Tenets of Chung Tai as a basic and profound teaching to help us in dealing with people and to cultivate character and peacefulness:

To our elders be respectful,
To our juniors be kind,
With all humanity be harmonious,
In all endeavors be true.

In the beginning of 2007, Ocean Sky Chan Monastery announces the opening of new English and Chinese Beginner's Meditation Classes, and also the Mandarin Learning Class.

These classes are all free of charge and open to the public. Monastery is supported by your generous donations. Welcome to attend the classes and please call for pre-reservation.

Time: Beginner's Zen Meditation Classes—In Chinese: every Friday at 7:30 pm. / starting on Feb.2;

In English: every Saturday at 10:00 am. / starting on Feb.3

Mandarin Learning Class:
Every Saturday at 2:30 pm. / starting on Jan.27

Site: 716 Jose Abad Santos St., Little Baguio, San, Juan, M.M.

Tel: 723-6132 or 726-0600 / Fax :722-4400

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WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7, 2007

People, Events & Products

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Editor Aries Espinosa

SM Advantage Card rewards loyal members

SHE SHOPPED; SHE RENEWED HER SM ADvantage Card, and won 500,000 points or P500,000 worth of shopping money from the SM Advantage Card Renewal campaign.

Elena Tiongzon of Makati, who has been a member of this rewards program since 2003, remembers purchasing kitchen accessories from SM Homeworld when the cashier told her that she needed to renew her card. Luckily, "this was the time they launched their 'P1MM Shopping Spree Renewal Raffle Promo' and I qualified," says Elena, who is the liaison staff of the Philippine National Police.

She did not expect to be the grand prize winner, but nevertheless considers this a blessing. Elena adds, "SM rewards those who are really loyal to them. Having an SM Advantage Card is an advantage, indeed.

Like Elena, members can avail themselves of exclusive privileges and perks upon presentation of the SM Advantage Card, including a free Wendy's Hamburger or SVM Frosty or Side Salad for a minimum purchase of P150. It also entitles them to great freebies and discounts at participating SM Supermall tenants, conversion of SM Advantage points to PAL Mabuhay Miles, and the option to avail of a P100,000 Philam accident insurance for only 20 points.

ELENA Tingzon receives a 500,000 points or P500,000 worth of shopping spree from SM Advantage Renewal Promo presented by Rey Mclang of SM Advantage.

Jollibee Kids Meal blasts with Transformers collectibles until February 10

THE DELIGHTFUL TREATS OF JOLLIBEE KIDS Meal sizzle with the Transformers Cybertron Robot Blasters. Get into the action with Vector Prime, Optimus Prime, Megatron and Jetfire while enjoying the yummy goodness of your all-time, all-season favorites at Jollibee. The latest toy collectibles come in nifty and vibrant designs loaded with its distinctively fantastic robot features that Transformers are best known for. These amazing toys can be availed of for every order of Jollibee Kids Meal of your choice, which includes the burger meal, spaghetti meal, burger steak meal and chicken joy.

So brace yourself and be amazed with the grandest comeback of the most popular robots of all time in all Jollibee outlets nationwide from Jan. 13 to Feb. 10. The Transformers animated series is seen every Saturdays and Sundays at 6:30 p.m. and 9:30 a.m. on Jack TV. For brand licensing, call 722-4311, e-mail licensing@empiremultimedia.com or log on to www.empiremultimedia.com.

Diners Club Philippines wins best franchise for 2006

IN THE 2006 DINERS CLUB INTERNAtional Asia Pacific Franchise Awards, Diners Club Philippines topped the 12 Asia Pacific franchises as it garnered the Best Franchise Award following a strong overall performance throughout 2006. This achievement is the second for the franchise in the last three years, the first regional awards having been given in 2004.

This year's win can be attributed to several key success factors such as the consistent net card growth through to October 2006, a robust sales growth also through October 2006, a consistent stream of new products and features that helped enhance and revitalize the card, expanded merchant acceptance, high quality customer service and an efficient card operations.

Belen C. Lim, chair of SB Cards Corp (the exclusive franchise owner of Diners Club in the Philippines), said, "We at SB Cards cannot be happier with our performance this year and we are equally glad that we are being recognized for all our efforts. With the mantra, 'global brand, local business', our winning formula is composed of two major factors: an experienced management team committed to overall growth; and an excellent execution of innovative programs coupled with high quality service. SB Cards has made it a priority to shamelessly work across our network of merchants and implement this winning formula to suit each and everyone's business needs. As a concrete example, our Diners Club customer call center has been judged as the best in the region."

Security Bank Corp, the mother company that owns SB Cards Inc, has also been such an important asset in the excellent performance of Diners Club. With its branch network acting as a major retail vendor of the credit card brand, including the fulfillment locations nationwide for the redemption of features and special programs exclusive to the roster of Diners Club members.

Diners Club Asia Pacific is comprised of six Citigroup franchises (Japan, Australia, Hong Kong, Greater China, Vietnam, and Thailand) and six independent franchises (Singapore, New Zealand, Malaysia, Korea, Indonesia and the Philippines).

RECEIVING the 2006 Best Franchise award for SB Cards are Frederick Dy, chair, Security Bank Corp (left), Belen Lim, chair, SB Cards Corp (middle right) and Alberto Villarosa, president and CEO, Security Bank Corp (right). Presenting the award to SB Cards is Bryan Ericson, Asia Pacific head of Diners Club International (middle left).

14th PIDSP annual confab

THE PEDIATRIC INFECTIOUS DISease Society of the Philippines (PIDSP) will be holding its 14th Annual Convention with the theme: "New Directions and Developments in Pediatric Infections" on Feb. 7 and 8 at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel, 1 Garden Way, Ortigas Center, Mandaluyong City. Registration counters were opened Feb. 6 from 1 to 5 p.m. The main topics will focus on the latest developments and innovations in the diagnosis and management of pediatric infectious diseases. Heading the list of distinguished speakers is Dr. Tina Q. Tan, a pediatric infectious disease specialist from the Children's Memorial Hospital, Chicago, Illinois. For more details, call the secretariat at 374-1855; telefax 412-6998; or e-mail pidsp@uplink.com.ph.

Christine Bersola: Most-liked TV personality

EVERY YEAR THE SOUTHEAST Asia Foundation for Children's Television (SEAFCTV) awards the coveted "Anak TV Seal" to television shows considered to be child-sensitive and family-friendly. It also recognizes celebrities who can serve as role models worthy to be emulated by the younger crowd. The "Anak TV Seal" is determined by 4,000 jurors via screenings held nationwide. The respondents include bishops, college deans, teachers, parents, business executives, and government workers. For 2006, the "Anak TV Seal" was given to 87 television shows and 10 male and female TV personalities who were all recognized during the Dec. 8 awarding ceremony.

On top of the list for the female category was Sta. Lucia Realty's latest endorser, Christine "Tintin" Bersola-Babao. A well-rounded TV personality, hands-on mom and loving housewife, it was not surprising that this bubbly host of "Magandang Umaga Bayan" was chosen, together with big stars like Sharon Cuneta, Mel Tiangco, and Korina Sanchez, as one of TV's child-friendliest personalities in the country today.

Sta. Lucia Realty, developer of first-class communities where dream homes are built, takes pride in having Tintin Bersola-Babao part of the Sta. Lucia family. Tintin is the perfect choice to represent Sta. Lucia properties. Her busy lifestyle, meticulous eye for details and discriminating taste befits the master-planned communities Sta. Lucia develops.

Tintin has been a loyal Sta. Lucia property owner even when she was still single. Now that she is already married and has a very beautiful daughter of her own, she still lives in a Sta. Lucia property. She even considers her present home her dream home. And it was not an ordinary piece of property bought from one real estate broker. It has a very romantic story to tell that will surely touch everyone's hearts.

Busy from work, Tintin needs to relax and be able to find refuge in a lovely house everyday where she spends quality time with her family. Tintin and her husband

moved in to their dream home in a Sta. Lucia property three years ago. From then until now, she is as excited as the first day when they moved in to go home everyday from work and see their beautiful daughter Antonia in a safe and secure home.

"I really love where I live now. I can not imagine life outside this community. I think I will not have another home as beautiful and as peaceful as our present home. I have a very charming neighborhood that is accessible anywhere, yet I still feel the comfort and serenity I've always wanted in a community. It's like living in another world when in fact it is located in the heart of the busy and chaotic city," said Tintin.

Sta. Lucia properties are gated, secure and strategically situated communities, which is why a Sta. Lucia property is ideal for growing families like Tintin's.

"We are in fact preparing for a bigger family, that's why this year we will be expanding our home. We are so blessed that we were able to acquire another piece of property adjacent to our home. We will definitely be staying here for the rest of our lives, watch our family grow and most probably spend our retirement days here or in another Sta. Lucia property outside Manila. This is home for me and I will not find any place like my home anywhere," ended Tintin.

For family moms like Tintin, nothing compares to being able to give joy not just to her family but to the millions of people who watch her everyday.

RESERVISTS MEDICAL MISSION

A large group of multi-service reservists headed by Col. Jesus G. Cabarrus, PAF (R), together with elements of the 131st Army Reserve Division headed by Col. Virgilio Aganon, in conjunction with the National Capital Region Command headed by Maj. Gen. Ben Dolorfino, conducted free medical, dental, optical, surgical, deworming, milkfeeding and nutritional product and toys distribution and community development action in Barangay Las Haciendas, Laurel, Batangas last week. Over 1,800 patients and recipients were benefited. Shown is Cabarrus dispensing milkfeeding to a child assisted by Msgt Oscar Magno, PAF (R), and Msgt Romy Pulgado, PAF (R).

Asian legal website launched Jan. 10

Web browsers looking for laws and court decisions of Asia-Pacific countries will no longer have difficulty making searches as all pertinent legal information are now contained in a single website. On Jan. 10, the Asian Legal Information Institute or AsianLII website (www.asianlii.org .) was launched in the Philippines with no less than Supreme Court Chief Justice Reynaldo S. Puno and Australian Ambassador Tony Hely as guests of honor.

AsianLII is a non- profit and free access website for legal information from all 27 countries and territories in Asia. It already provides access to 102 databases drawn from almost all 27 Asian countries, which includes over 140,000 cases and more than 15,000 pieces of legislation.

The legal information website aims to facilitate and promote comparative research, make laws of Asia -Pacific countries more easily accessible, encourage international trade and investment, and provide the many other benefits of free access to law.

AsianLII was first launched for free public access Dec. 8, 2006 in Sydney with launches in a number of Asian countries taking place in 2007, beginning with the Philippines. It provides for searching and browsing databases of legislation, case-law, law reform reports, law journals and other legal information, where available, from each country in the region.

Arellano University and Arellano Law Foundation (ALF) represent the Philippines in AsianLII as they operate the Lawphil Project (www.lawphil.net), which is one of the most complete and freely accessed databanks of Philippine laws, jurisprudence and other legal materials. It is the legal website project of the ALF, a non-stock, non-profit institution specializing in legal education which manages Arellano University School of Law.

AsianLII is being developed by the Australasian Legal Information Institute (AustLII), a joint facility of the Law Faculties at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS) and the University of New South Wales (UNSW), in cooperation with partner institutions in Asian countries and other legal information institutes belonging to the Free Access to Law Movement.

World-class musician finds good deal in Phinma property

INTERNATIONALLY renowned pianist Raul Sunico, praised for his "unusual gifts of lyricism and poetry in his playing, as well as great brilliance" by his eminent mentor Sascha Gorodnitzki, has earned international recognition as a concert pianist, orchestral soloist and a composer-arranger of Philippine music.

After a three-decade stint overseas, with New York as the last place where he lived and parlayed his talent into acclaim, Sunico returned to the Philippines in 2002 to accept an invitation to head University of Sto. Tomas' College of Music as its dean.

Back in his homeland, Sunico soon enough found himself investing his hard-earned savings in prime properties in Metro Manila.

Whilst maintaining the ancestral house in Banawe, Quezon City, which he shares with his mother, Sunico decided to acquire two adjoining units in a posh condominium building along Roxas Boulevard, Manila. This is where he parked his collection of choice pieces of furniture he bought throughout his years of stay in New York.

"I shipped pieces of furniture I fancied and bought for my apartment in New York. I am happy to have them here with me although it cost me a lot in shipping them," quipped Sunico.

A collector not only of quality furniture but also of good property investments, Sunico would later find himself getting a unit in a condominium community along Mindanao Avenue, Quezon City. He said he found a diamond in the rough in Phinma Property Holdings Corp's (Phinma Properties) Spazio Bernardo-West Villas.

In an interview, Sunico shared that he was then looking for a place to stay near a restaurant business he put up north of Quezon City. Upon learning about Spazio Bernardo, he immediately took interest in investing in the expansion site to the existing 11-villa condominium township. Dubbed as the "West Villas," the expansion site was just starting its groundwork and was being offered at more affordable pre-selling rates at the time Sunico came to inquire and see the project.

The West Villas comprises four medium-rise buildings being built on a lot adjacent to Spazio Bernardo's 1.6-hectare development, adding another 319 value-for-money condo units to the Italian-inspired community's existing 957 units. Practically sold out with just a few select units left, West Villas will be ready for turnover by the first quarter of this year only after less than five months from the start of its construction.

Phinma Properties president Willie J. Uy said in a previous interview, "With construction started in November of last year, the West Villas is only one of the projects we have in the pipeline. We are also planning to develop a Spanish-inspired community in a 1.5 hectare property in Commonwealth. A third and probably the most ambitious project is a 3.1-hectare site in Sucat for which we even hired a masterplanning expert with extensive experience in Singapore housing developments."

Phinma Properties AVP for marketing and design Grant Orbeta says that West Villas offers value-added features not commonly found in affordable housing such as modular kitchen counters, aluminum windows, tiled flooring, and painted walls and ceilings. Orbeta adds that they also hired a feng shui consultant to ensure that the new homes will bring luck and prosperity into the lives of the buyers.

Probably the only one in its league to be able to offer units conveniently located in the Metropolis at a pre-selling price range of P500,000 to P800,000 through Pag-Ibig and in-house financing, Phinma Properties targets home-buyers belonging to the upper and lower B, and upper C markets.

To this, Sunico says, "I have to praise Phinma Properties for coming up with such a good project which gives not just the upper-class income brackets but even the middle to lower brackets a chance to acquire a condo unit at such a nice community."

The musician extraordinaire adds, "I can't wait to design my unit and add beautiful pieces of furniture into it."

R.P. CAR OF THE YEAR

Automotive scribes' votes nearing conclusion

By Tessa R. Salazar

YOU SERIOUSLY NEED motoring scribes guide to choosing a vehicle, especially if:

- You think you're too good about cars and you won't trust anyone else.
- You think the car you're eyeing is too good to be compared to other cars;
- You think you did your homework researching on the car you like.
- You've already hopped from one car manufacturer to another and did some serious test drives, and still couldn't make up your mind.
- You've surfed the Net till you're fingers turned sore.
- You've read numerous test-drive reviews and still can't get the point.
- You're not satisfied with other yearend car countdowns.

Well, how about the ultimate motoring journalists' guide, the Car of the Year? It certainly wouldn't hurt your purchasing decision learning so much more from a comprehensive testfest in the country with former rally drivers and writers conducting the tests. The Applied Leisure and Sales Operations Group headed the quantitative evaluation that includes acceleration, braking distance test recorded by the GTech Pro Meter as supplied by Speed Lab and were recorded for tallying purposes.

Among the qualitative evaluation rated were steering, ride comfort, exterior fascia, build quality and other qualitative factors.

33 vehicles tested

The Car Awards Group Inc. (Cagi), the organizer of the country's Car of the Year (Coty), has tested a total of 33 vehicles since November last year. Testfests will conclude on Feb. 11 with Previa (luxury MPV), Audi Q7 3.0 TDI (ultra luxury SUV entry). Pending entries are Jeep Commander (luxury SUV entry) and Chrysler Pacifica (luxury MPV entry), which are pending release from Customs in Pier, Manila.

On Feb. 4, tested were entry-level and luxury multipurpose vehicles and pickups. Among these were the Ford Ranger (a previous Coty winner), which now sports a three-liter turbo diesel equipped with Common Rail Direct Injection Diesel (CRDi) and the Mitsubishi Strada pickup, which has a new 2.5-liter turbo diesel engine, also with common-rail technology.

For the entry-level MPV segment, last year's winner, the Toyota Innova, competes with Toyota Avanza 1.5-liter VVT-I engine.

Also tested was the luxury MPV segment entry, the seven-seater Mitsubishi's Grandis 2.4-Mivec engine, last year's category winner.

No smooth sailing

The Car Awards Group Inc.'s current testfest hasn't encountered smooth sailing, though. Cagi president Aida Sevilla Mendoza said some test units were sold out or had no new units available for testing.

Not tested were Subaru Impreza WRX, Audi A3 3.2 Quattro, BMW 5 series (a category winner and this year's contender) and Volvo XC 70 cross country Turbo (also a winner and one of this year's contenders).

Car of the Year is now on its 3rd edition, and is organized by Cagi, a nonstock, nonprofit organization made up of writers for various motoring, business and lifestyle publications and broadcast outfits. The Car of the Year award is Cagi's flagship project.

Companies that believe in this endeavor and have supported the cause are Automobile Association Philippines, Manila International Auto Show (organized by Worldbex Services International), North Luzon Tollways, Bridgestone tires, FedEx, Petron Corp., Sony Ericsson, Standard Insurance, San Miguel Corp., Rockwell Land, and Forest Hills Golf and Country Club in Antipolo.

Forest Hills provided the test venue by closing off several roads of the sprawling exclusive subdivision for the Coty testers.

To ensure that Cagi's decision is not swayed or biased, car manufacturers are not allowed to sponsor Cagi awards and testfests for obvious reasons.

Audi TT Coupé, one for the 'little black book'

MY DRIFT

Andre Palma

JUST TWO DAYS IN AUDI'S NEWEST sporting coupé and I'm short for words. In fact, it has taken me sometime to find the slant for this week's installment. Like an intimate dinner with a very interesting and attractive female companion, one just wants to remember all the little moments and jot them down somewhere. Consider this then as the "little black book" entry of my all too short time with the Audi TT Coupé.

My first five minutes with the low slung, two-door looker was spent perusing the shapes and shadows of the coachwork. I've seen prettier and sleeker but there is a definite X-factor that this coupé exudes. The previous iteration of the TT Coupé was already a strong design statement with its bulbous and rounded lines, technology the obvious theme for design. No other words but aggressive and athletic better describe the current model, hinting aptly at the experience that lies in the driver's seat.

The cockpit and interior are typically what one would find in a purpose-built machine. There is quality and a single overall theme of sporting intent, nothing to distract the driver from the obvious task at hand. Seating position is excellent and all the controls are installed with the driver in mind. Wrapped in the leather, aluminum and the high-grade polycarbonate of the cockpit, I very much doubt that any of the Luftwaffe's finest has had it any better.

What will sell this car

The first hour behind the wheel is what will sell this car. Again, faster and more nimble cars are available in the market but only a handful deliver an experience as well sorted as the Audi TT Coupé. At the core of this fun, petite driving package are three systems that help orchestrate the car's overall upbeat and pulse-raising nature.

The 2.0-liter FSI turbo power plant is the heart of the Audi TT Coupé. While 200 bhp is really nothing to write home about, the 280 Nm of torque of this engine is consistently available from about 2,000 all the way to 5,000 rpm. In real terms this means that once the turbo spools, its g-forces and rushing scenery for the most part. Audi has also tuned the aural experience of the TT Coupé producing a baritone buzz while on the throttle with the intake making a "'whoomph" sound on the up-shifts.

The six-speed, twin clutch sequential gearbox is also a must for the TT Coupé. Dubbed S-tronic by Audi, all this really means that one gets a true manual gearbox without the clutch pedal. A computer readies the next possible gear that the driver can shift to and with the aid of a second clutch assembly, makes the transition from cog to cog as seamless as a well-ridden clutch pedal.

Batter chassis balance

With handling in mind, Audi has gone with a two-material body frame for the TT Coupé. Of the 260 kg of the vehicle's body shell, almost 70 percent is made from aluminum with the steel sections used mostly in the rear for better chassis balance. This translates directly into a stiff, responsive sporty temperament that completes the character of the Audi TT Coupé.

In full throttle situations, weaving in and out of traffic, the car reminds you that its rear is quite lively, even for a front-wheel-drive car. This is good because when the road gets tangled and twisty the same animated rear end can be put to good use with a little blip or lift of the throttle without the car being tail happy or too prone to understeer. Balance is what this car is about.

I doubt that I'll get another date with the Audi TT Coupé, especially one that has allowed such a rather thorough evaluation of the car. As much as I'd like a second chance to get to know her better, the schedule for the demonstrator seems booked. Fine by me, time to move on, I guess. But if the she calls back, what can I do?

COCKPIT and controls—dogfight central

AUDI TT Coupé, wouldn't you hope for a second date?

Car insurance woes: the conclusion

ON THE ROAD

Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

THIS COLUMN LAST MONTH ON MY exasperating experience with Mapfre Insular and insurance broker Aon Philippines elicited a number of reactions from readers.

Some e-mailed helpful information and advice about the car insurance business, two asserted that they also had problems dealing with Mapfre, one or two recommended transferring to a more reliable insurance firm while still another offered his company's services as an insurance broker.

Phil Gribble, the managing director of Aon Asia and Alexander Reyes, Mapfre's first vice president for motor, marine and casualty underwriting, e-mailed their apologies and their promises to change their procedures so to avoid the recurrence of delays in processing claims in the future.

90 days

The other readers stressed that insurance agencies are usually given 90 days by insurance companies to remit premium payments for policies issued. They concluded that Aon's failure to remit my payment to Mapfre before the traffic accident happened, delayed Mapfre's processing of my claim.

However, Roger Becaldo, administrative officer of Tokyo Marine Malayan Insurance Co's Cebu Service Office, asserted that while it is the insurer's policy to settle claims only upon receipt of payment of the premium, Mapfre should have settled my claim immediately.

A problem

Further, the insurer should not tell the claimant that there is a problem with his/her claim since the broker hasn't remitted the premium. This will place the claimant in an embarrassing light. The insurer's staff should handle the matter in a way that will not offend the claimant since, in the first place, the claimant has nothing to do whatsoever with any agreement between the broker and the insurer.

Another reader, Hoover Uy de Baron, president of Baron Group Insurance Brokers, criticized Aon. "First of all, you should not have needed to wait for an accident inspector and a claim report. All that is usually required is an affidavit. In fact, your broker should be the one to follow up and file all the documents for you and the person that you got into an accident with. All you really should have done is one phone call to your insurance broker."

Advisable

A similar comment came from Patricia Yap, who wrote that she has been working in the nonlife insurance business for the past four years. "In my opinion, it is advisable to have an insurance agent. Why? Because as you experienced, you had difficulty getting the letter of authority issued within three to five days as promised. Through the help of an agent or even your insurance agency, you could have had the process expedited since they already have contacts in your insurance company."

Both Ms Yap and Mr. Becaldo suggested that when I renew my policy, I should get a Private Vehicle (PV) policy. I was unaware previously that under the Commercial Vehicle (CV) policy that I have at present, the deductible is one percent of the sum insured or P3,000, whichever is higher. Thus my chagrin when I discovered that my deductible is P10,399.50. Under a PV policy, the deductible is only 0.50 percent of the sum insured or P2,000, whichever is higher.

Lower premium

Mr. Becaldo pointed out that since the CV policy has a lower premium compared to the PV policy, some insurance companies issue CV policies to private car owners who do not want to pay a high premium. However, in case of a claim for own damage, the insured will have to shell out a very high deductible—which is exactly what happened to me. So theoretically, if I or my driver have more than one accident during the year covered by my CV policy, I will end up paying the CV policy's high deductible more than once. Which makes me glad that I don't have a driver.

All this hassle about collecting a claim reminds me of what happened many, many years ago, when my father was still alive, and working as the president of a life insurance company. My car collided with a speeding taxicab at an intersection in Quezon City, but the insurance company with which my car was insured refused to release the letter of authority (LOA) for the repair. I had to phone my dad who then phoned the Insurance Commissioner who in turn phoned the president of the insurance company. The LOA was released the very next day.

But, as usual, the insurance company had to have the last laugh. They informed me that they would not renew my policy. As if I wanted to?!

* * *

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With latest concept car, Jaguar takes new direction

By Charles E. Buban

IF YOU'RE GIVEN TO thinking that Jaguars are all about retro and conservative styling, then think again.

Jaguar Cars Inc., the country's exclusive distributor of the premium car brand, recently released images of the C-XF, the Jaguar concept car that made its public debut last month during the 2007 North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan.

As the name implies, the C-XF is a concept version of XF sedan that Jaguar will launch next year to replace the current S-Type (midsize) sedan.

"But unlike most concept versions, this one will be very close to the production model in terms of profile, external and internal features. While the C-XF is powered by a 400 horsepower 4.2-liter V8 engine, the production model will be offered with a wide range of engines. Indeed, it's been a while since Jaguar has taken a fresh design direction and this will definitely signal the onset of a new era for the car brand," said JCI president Wellington Soong.

Same design team

The C-XF was designed by the same team that produced Jaguar's award-winning XK sports GT range in 2005: Ian Callum, Jaguar's director of design and Julian Thomson, head of advanced design.

From the images released, the C-XF sports slit-like headlights, huge grille (that is recessed deeply into the body thus, looking more like a jet's air intake), aggressive and muscular body paneling, distinctive front wraparound wheel arches and bespoke Pirelli tires wrapping 21-inch machined, polished aluminum wheels.

In addition, the C-XF also features a new Jaguar badge that is fitted to the grille, not on the hood as we are so now familiar with.

New technologies

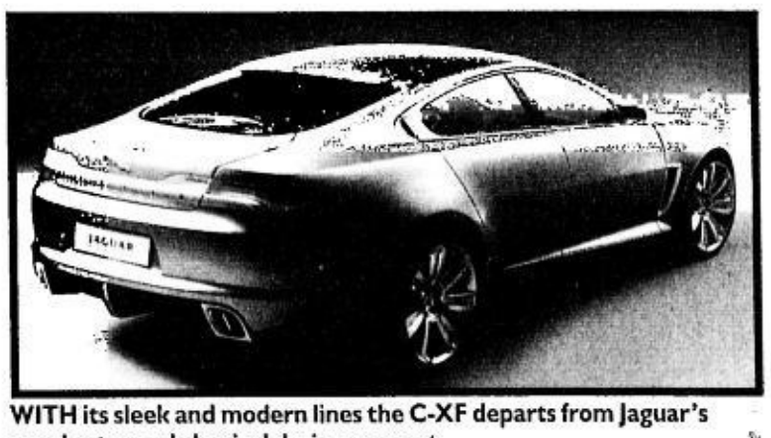
"Just like what is found in the C-XF, the upcoming production version will embrace new technologies that will surely enhance driver experience," Soong promised.

The C-XF features a new technology called JaguarSense, a prototype technology that employs motion-detecting sensors—reacts to the sweep of a hand—to activate certain functions in the cockpit to be activated instead of the usual pushing of buttons.

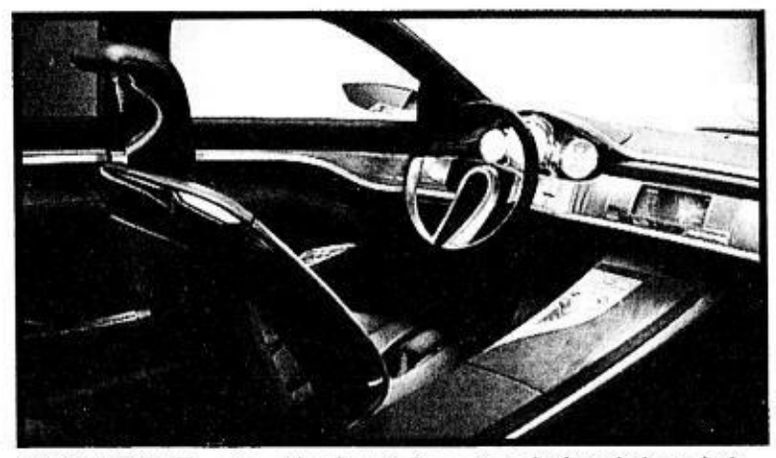
The C-XF also has a jewel-like "power" button that pulses like a heartbeat on the center console and once pushed, aluminum rings lower from the center console to reveal the gear shift knob.

As the engine starts, a blue light sweeps around the cabin, with the entire roofline illuminating with a muted blue light and a final blue light shines from the front grille, signifying the car is already on.

Indeed, Song said all these features are prime examples of how Jaguar has adapted to changing customers' tastes and hopes that the forthcoming XF will truly make the Jaguar brand among the most sought after in the premium car market.



WITH its sleek and modern lines the C-XF departs from Jaguar's usual retro and classical design concept.



LIGHTWEIGHT, sculpted bucket-style seats and a futuristic cockpit fills the C-XF interior.

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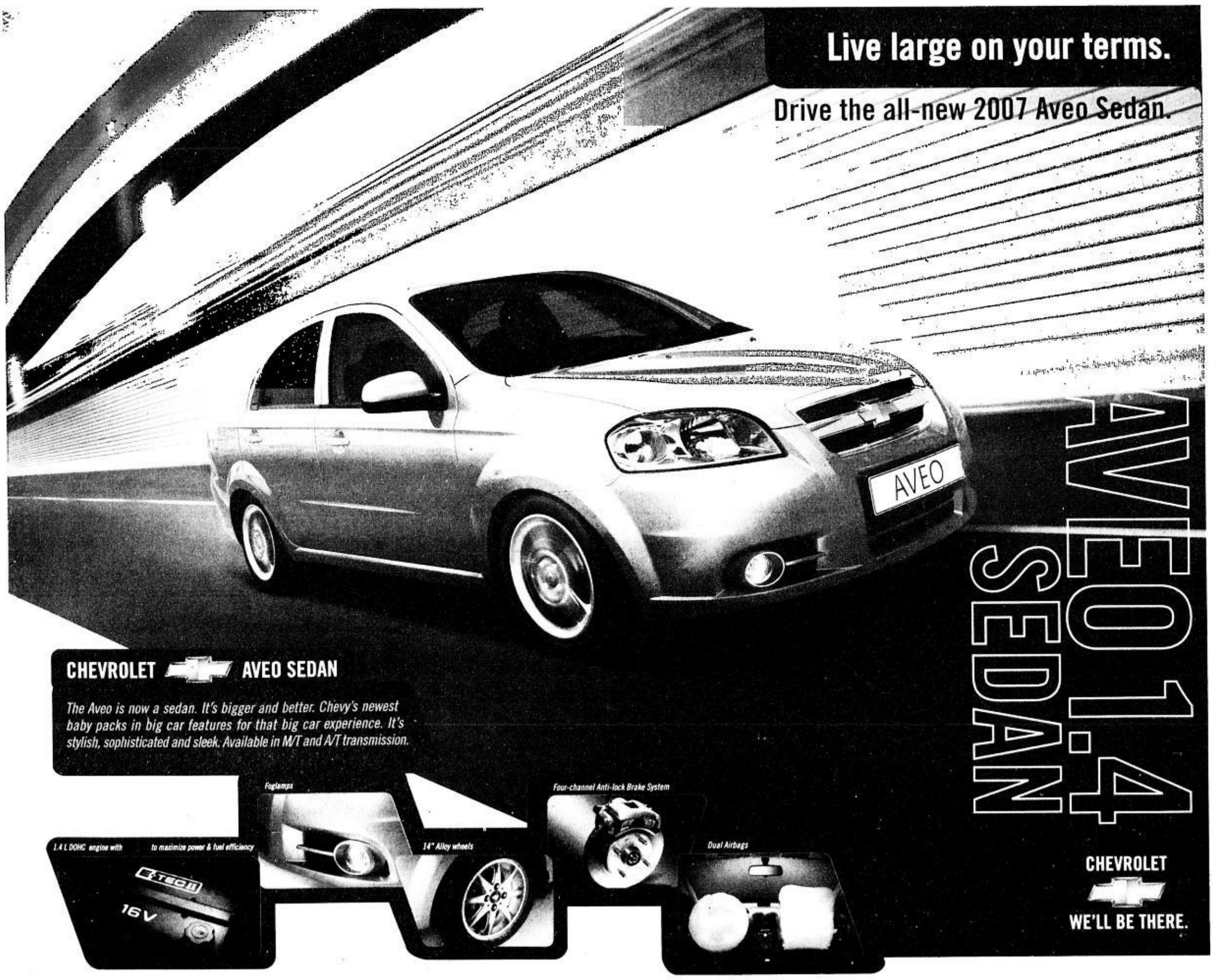

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Prom *princesses*

2bU! helps Jamila Anne Leosala and Djam Mansilla score the perfect gown for their big days

AFTER her hair and makeup

WITH her hairstylists and makeup artist Myca Feng

DJAM before the makeover

Text by Bianca Consunji
Photos by Tammy David
2bU! Correspondents

JUST ABOUT EVERY GIRL dreams of the perfect prom: a dashing date, beautiful hair and makeup, and a picture-perfect gown.

However, the prom, aside from being creating unrealistic expectations (not everyone can be prom queen, after all), is expensive. Female prom-goers have to ask for money from their parents not only to pay for overpriced dinners for their Neanderthal dates, but for the gown and makeup session at the salon as well.

With this is mind, Jamila Anne Leosala and Diorella Justine Aligada Mansilla (Djam for short) asked 2bU!'s help to score the perfect gown for their big days. Jamila, who wrote to 2bU! last Christmas, already had a lineup for her gown, hair and makeup. However, some last-minute changes had to be made, and a new team was brought in to help her transform into prom-queen material.

Djam, on the other hand, got a prom makeover with the help of her mom, Laleng Mansilla. Ms Mansilla initially just requested help to find a shop that rented out prom gowns, but 2bU! asked the help of several people from the fashion and beauty industries to make her daughter's makeover complete.

For the two girls, Marielle Santos of Cinderella Clothing Corporation had two dress styles from the Seventeen Prom Collection made in their sizes. Jamila, whose prom had a royalty theme, got a regal apple green strapless gown. Djam got a bright fuchsia long cocktail dress for her masquerade party, which she embellished with a glittery mask and rhinestone accessories.

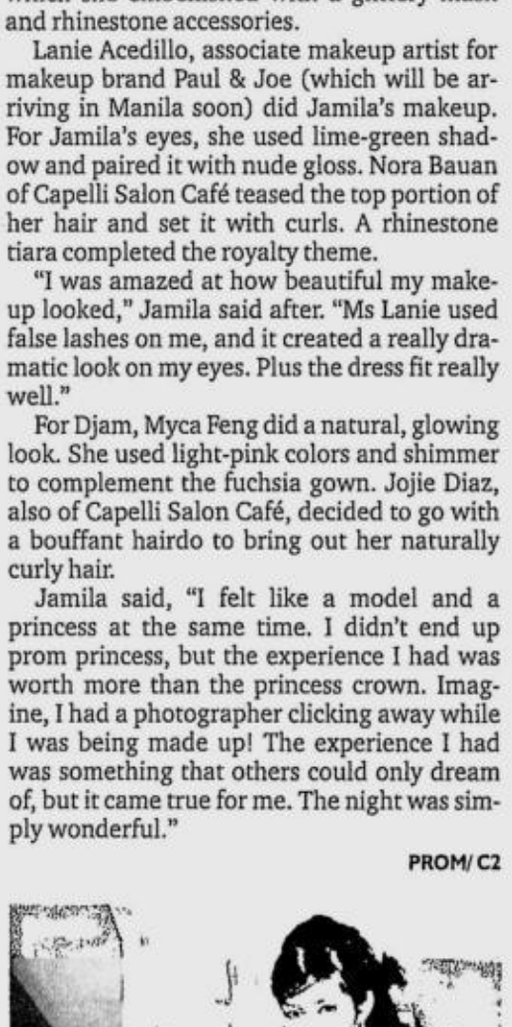
Lanie Acedillo, associate makeup artist for makeup brand Paul & Joe (which will be arriving in Manila soon) did Jamila's makeup. For Jamila's eyes, she used lime-green shadow and paired it with nude gloss. Nora Bauan of Capelli Salon Café teased the top portion of her hair and set it with curls. A rhinestone tiara completed the royalty theme.

"I was amazed at how beautiful my makeup looked," Jamila said after. "Ms Lanie used false lashes on me, and it created a really dramatic look on my eyes. Plus the dress fit really well."

For Djam, Myca Feng did a natural, glowing look. She used light-pink colors and shimmer to complement the fuchsia gown. Jojie Diaz, also of Capelli Salon Café, decided to go with a bouffant hairdo to bring out her naturally curly hair.

Jamila said, "I felt like a model and a princess at the same time. I didn't end up prom princess, but the experience I had was worth more than the princess crown. Imagine, I had a photographer clicking away while I was being made up! The experience I had was something that others could only dream of, but it came true for me. The night was simply wonderful."

PROM/ C2



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THE MODEL'S hair was long and curly, so Goulven gave her a new style that's easier to manage.

TEXTURE plus bangs—that's the recipe for hair in 2007.

A *hairy* forecast

For 2007, the key words are versatility and low maintenance. Bangs are big and curls are out

Text by Pam Pastor
Photos by Ryan Lim

LAST YEAR WAS ALL ABOUT curls. Goulven Le Floch, French consultant and hair stylist for Franck Provost and Fabio Salsa, attributes it to the Korean wave that has hit the country.

"We had so many people coming in asking for curls because of what they've seen on Korean soaps."

But 2007, he says, is the year to bid curls bye bye. "No more curls, curls are done."

Instead, hair this year will be about "versatility"—for both men and women.

"You go with the hair nature of the client. There's no real shape, it can be molded. It has to be versatile in a way that if she doesn't want to blow-dry it, it will still look good. It should also allow you to get different styles each time," says Goulven, who has been with the salon for five years.

Versatility is important for busy people, he says. "A huge number of our clients would say, I don't blow-dry my hair because I'm busy or because they don't know how. They want something they don't have to fix."

GOULVEN Le Floch hard at work

This year, high-maintenance hair is out. "Women have to be able to fix their hair in 10 minutes," says Goulven.

2007 is also the year for bangs. "Bangs have been big the past two or three months. I call it the sided bangs."

Sided bangs are versatile as well. "If you want hair falling, you can have that. But if you want it sided, you can have it as well."

Men have also been inspired by Koreanovelas hair-wise. "For the past two years, they've been keeping their hair a little longer. This year, men will go for a cleaner look. Shorter, but there will still be length and a lot of texture so they'll have something to work with."

Again, versatility is the key word. "They can gel it for the office and get funky on weekends."

Natural effect

Even for hair color, the operative word is low maintenance. "This year we're going for a more natural effect. And you only have to do it every four months."

Goulven also stresses the importance of taking care of your hair with the right products. He recommends using a good shampoo like Kerastase Bain Satin 1 or 2 for people with normal or dry hair, while people who have gone through a lot of chemical treatments can try Kerastase Bain De Force. Intensive conditioning will help maintain beautiful hair, too.

"Once a week, use a deep treatment which is different from any conditioner," he suggests.

Goulven has timeless hair tips for both men and women. Men should be wary of overgelling, he says.

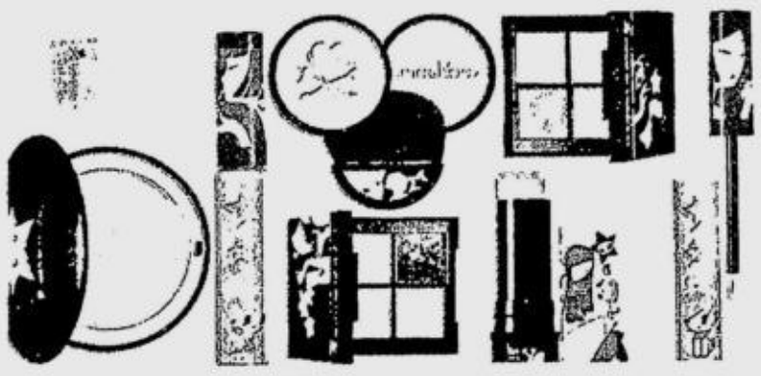
"They should try experimenting with other products," he adds. "Gel is so stiff. They should try wax. Men don't like wax because it's shiny but now they can get wax that doesn't shine at all."

Women shouldn't try so hard, he says. "They want curls, they want straight hair. Don't fight your hair. Just find your style and go with it."

Now doesn't that sound so liberating?

Franck Provost is at 120 Jupiter St. Bel-Air Village, Makati, (tels.. 8953401 to 03), with branches in New Alabang Village, Muntinlupa City (tels. 7723284 to 86). Fabio Salsa is in Power Plant Mall and soon will have another branch at Corinthian Gardens, QC.

E-mail the author at ppastor@inquirer.com.ph.



Here are several young-looking spring/summer collections that would be great for wearing to the prom

LANCÔME Pop Cherub

SMASHBOX Tokidoki collection

Makeup *magic*

Text by Bianca Consunji
2bU! Correspondent

CAN'T DECIDE what makeup look you want to achieve for your prom?

You'll have to take several factors into consideration: your personality, prom dress, venue and of course, budget. If you have additional pesos to spare, then by all means, go ahead and book that makeup artist you've been reading about in the magazines. Make sure to book the salon and makeup artist early, as proms are held on almost a weekly basis from now until the end of March.

Others go for the more practical route and opt to have their makeup done at cosmetic counters in malls. This isn't a bad idea, especially if the brand has established makeup artists (brands like Shu Uemura and MAC have trained artists who can do top-quality makeup at the counters).

While it's not necessary to purchase an item from the store—especially if you're on a budget—you might want to remember the shades that the artists use to bring out your best features. But if you're having it done without buying anything, call the store beforehand and inform the artist at once so he or she won't waste time convincing you to buy the items. This is also so the store can check if it has time (and people) to spare to do your makeup.

However, if you have the cash to spare, do try out an item or two from the brand. Many makeup brands are currently offering limited-edition spring/summer collections, which often carry the youngest and freshest-looking items of all the makeup collections in a year.

The advantage of purchasing an item used on you is that you can carry it around later that evening for a touch-up. Our best pick? Multipurpose products that

MAC Danse

can be used on the lips, cheeks, and sometimes eyes.

INQUIRER 2bU! scouted around for several young-looking spring/summer collections that would be great for wearing to the prom. Here are our favorites:

For the avant-garde diva: Shu Uemura Paradox—This is definitely not for wallflowers. The Shu Uemura Paradox collection combines masculine elements with feminine colors. The color palette includes several shades of pink, white, yellow and lilac, but these are not presented in the traditional feminine manner. If you love looking out for fashion forecasts and are bored with the usual girly collections, Paradox has just what you need.

Check out the Precise Eye Shadow in M Yellow 330, a bright matte yellow that's sure to catch attention; Vicious Apricot blush, a candied peach shade; Rouge Unlimited lipstick in PK 336 (fuchsia), and the ME White Drawing Pencil, which can be used to highlight the eyes.

However, the best part of the collection has to be the false lashes. You can opt for the full Mystical lashes (black trimmed with pink and white) or the Mystical Flare lashes (individual black, pink and white lashes). Incidentally, the white sections of the lashes are luminous, so be prepared for some attention when the lights dim. Also check out the new 50H brush, a flat but fluffy brush that you can tote along in your bag with no trouble at all.

For the girly-girl: MAC Danse—Inspired by graceful ballerinas, the MAC Danse collection contains all sorts of pastel shades in the form of eye shadow, lip gloss, lipstick, loose color pigment, and the star of the show, the Mineralize Skinfinish (MSF) dome.

This collection reminds one of an impressionistic painting: airy, full of light and texture, and all-out romantic. If your prom gown is all about layers of tulle, silk, and floral appliqué, this is the collection for you.

Our favorite in the collection is the Lightscapade MSF, which can be used as a highlighter and eye shadow (it looks like Paddle Pop ice cream in the pan because of its yellow, pink, blue, and orange swirls). We also like the sea green Pastorale pigment, frosted pink En Pointe lip gloss, and Rite of Spring eye shadow, a basic cream shade that can be used for any occasion.

For the animé lover: Smashbox Tokidoki—Packaging-wise, this is the best spring/summer collection of all the brands I mention here. The concept of Tokidoki art, which means "sometimes" in Japanese, was created by designer Simone Legno, who collaborated with Smashbox for the collection. The collection contains eye shadow quads, lip gloss, highlighter, and several kinds of blush, all decorated with Japanese-inspired pop art.

High-school girls will love the Soft Lights and Brush Set in Dolce Vita, which includes a large pot of pale-pink blush and a compact brush made of goat hair.

Also worth checking out are the Skin Tint (an oil-free multipurpose cream that can be used for the lips and cheeks) and the eye shadow quads (in Modella, a brown-and-peach based family, and Celebrita, which has pink and silver hues). For lip gloss, Drammatica, a bright pink shade, can go with *morena* and *mestiza* skin tones. Get the Tokidoki collection if you're wearing something trendy (like a ball skirt paired with a shirt) to your prom.

For the Marie Antoinette wannabe: Lancôme Pop Cherub—According to Zerline Chan, product manager of Lancôme, the Pop Cherub collection is a blend of modern and traditional elements.

"It's an offbeat vision of the 18th century," she said. "Think Marie Antoinette sitting in her boudoir while listening to electo music on her iPod. The shades are reminiscent of sweet ice cream with strawberry, pistachio, aniseed and chocolate."

The collection contains two eye shadow palettes, Sweet Caprice lip gloss (a delicious cotton candy pink gloss), three shades of Color Fever lipstick, and silver glitter eye liner. Get this if the "Marie Antoinette" movie was the inspiration for your prom gown.

For the classic coed: Awake Mirror Reflects—Japanese brand Awake takes its cue from a kaleidoscope, with its collage of overlapping hues and textures. However, the collection steers away from being too funky by making even its brightest colors wearable for even the meekest personalities.

This is perfect for girls whose dresses are inspired by vintage Hollywood gowns (think Audrey Hepburn and Greta Garbo). The collection's overall feel is classic, sophisticated and subtle.

The Mirror Reflects collection contains three eye shadow quads in Oriental Fuchsia (yellow, pale pink, bright pink, and brown), Glowing Gold (light gold, dark brown, and two shades of beige), and Always Blue (silver, sky blue, ocean blue, and midnight blue). It also has two shades of liquid eye liner in Blue Heaven and Golden Brown, and two shades of lip lacquer (Mandarin Peach and Elf Brown).

JAMILA before the makeover

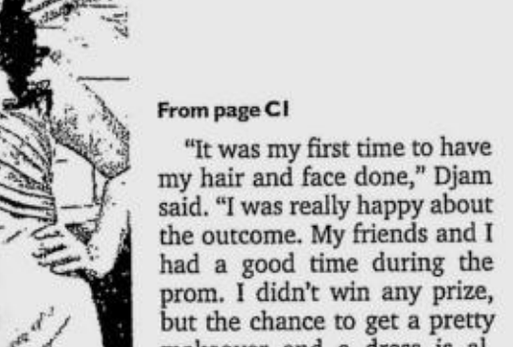
READY for her closeup

From page C1

"It was my first time to have my hair and face done," Djam said. "I was really happy about the outcome. My friends and I had a good time during the prom. I didn't win any prize, but the chance to get a pretty makeover and a dress is already the grand prize."

E-mail the author at biancaconsunji@yahoo.com

THE SEVENTEEN PROM COLLECTION IS AVAILABLE AT CINDERELLA STORES NATIONWIDE. PAUL & JOE WILL BE AVAILABLE AT RUSTAN'S THIS FEBRUARY. CONTACT LANIE ACEDILLO AT 0917-8486850. MYCA FENG CAN BE REACHED AT 0917-5581984. CAPELLI SALON AND CAFÉ IS AT 133 MOTHER IGNACIA COR. SOUTH ALBANO, QUEZON CITY. CALL 4161738 OR 4161738.



JAMILA in a gown made for her by Cinderella

WITH makeup artist Lanie and hairstylist Nora

SELF-ESTEEM CHRONICLES

By Karen Mendoza

GROWING UP, I WAS CALLED "Matet" by a lot of people not just because she was popular during those times but also because I resembled her very much.

With very curly hair and dimples to match, I thought I was adorable. However, there are things you want to change physically even if you're really young, and at the top of my list then were my wide forehead and huge nose.

How huge is huge? So huge that a cover of an acetone bottle could fit inside my nose (I know this because I tried it when I was 5). Well, yeah, you can laugh now. But it's true.

There was also an event that happened when I was 8 years old that triggered more insecurities. Second grade was the time of our first communion, and the teachers were choosing girls to act as angels. All the slots had been filled, so I really didn't care much if I wasn't in it. But a classmate of mine became ill and was not sure if she could make it to the occasion. To fill the spot, my adviser chose me to be her proxy. So I was dragged to another classroom and I was presented to my science teacher, the head of the event. She stared at me, looked at my adviser, and uttered the words I would never ever forget: "*Wala na bang mas maganda*?"

The teacher stared at me, looked at my adviser, and uttered the words I would never ever forget

I was young, but I knew what she meant. Until now when I remember this, I feel how badly hurt I was and I remember the pain very vividly. I felt sorry for myself. Sorry that I wasn't pretty enough for her and perhaps for other people.

I don't know how exactly I coped with the situation, but I remember burying myself in rehearsals for declamation contests and theater presentations. Worse, I ended up playing the disgusting and ugly girl to try to cover all the hurt. People commended my talent and remarked at how natural I played the part, but what they didn't know was that my tears were triggered by all the pain I'd kept inside because of my insecurities.

I guess my insecurities helped me somehow, because I became the champion in all the declamation contests in school, and the teachers loved to get me to act for special productions. I loved theater and the feeling of how liberating it could get whenever I shared my hurt to people who would listen. Somehow acting became my therapy.

In sixth grade, I grew taller (taller than the boys), developed bad acne, and became getting chubbier. So I had to accept that I could never be up on stage for the beauty pageants in school. I grew up trying to accept rejections from boys that I liked. And I grew up not knowing what true beauty was.

During high school, I was asked to join an audition (well, more like a contest) to become one of the contestants for inter-school speech competitions. I thought it was my forte so I went. Unfortunately, I lost and didn't get the part. Another rejection, but this time I didn't know how to handle it. I thought the one thing I was good at, my only talent, had now been taken away. I sank into depression for many weeks.

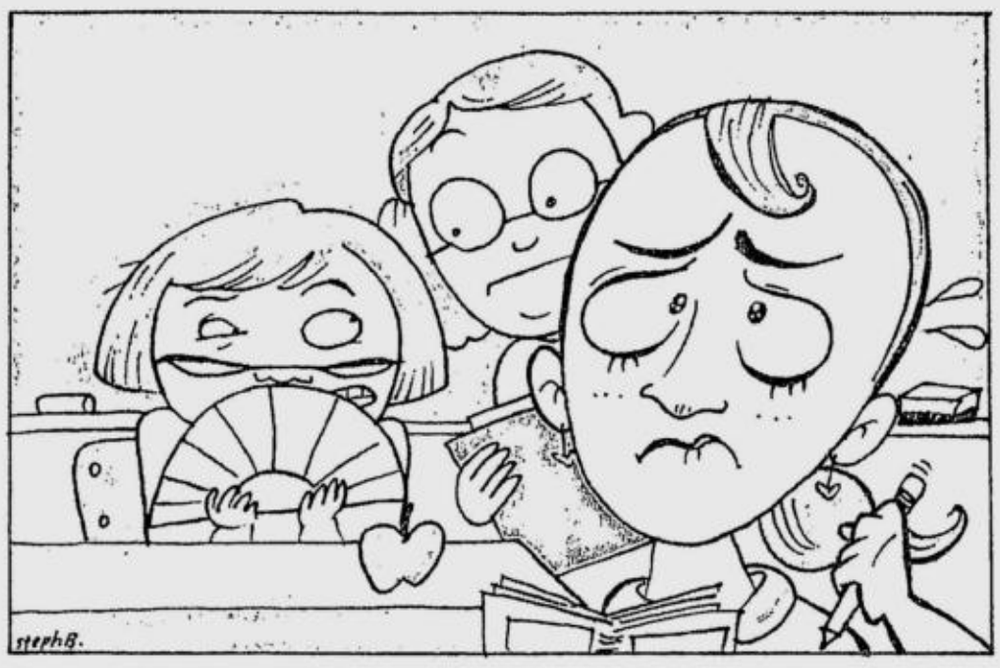
In a retreat we had, I received a letter from my mom that changed my perception of everything. Mom said she saw me lock myself inside my room and not talk to anybody after the said contest. And then she said, "In life there are many ups and downs. *Isa lang yun sa mga dapat mong pagdaanan*, but I'm always here. You're still No. 1 for me and I'm very proud of you and all your achievements."

I still get teary eyed whenever I read this letter. I knew then that somebody loved me and would accept me through and through.

Time passed by quickly, and with the new confidence I had I discovered I could do more things. I didn't know I could sing, be creative and paint a little. Now I'm doing photography and capturing the beauty in people, whatever insecurity they might have.

I overcame the acne problem, I stopped growing when I reached 5'5", and now I have a boyfriend who has a loving heart who reminds me I'm beautiful inside and out. Yes, my mom is still very supportive of everything I do. I just keep repeating her precious words to me whenever I'm at my lowest to remind myself that someone is proud of whoever and whatever I have become.

The Self-Esteem Chronicles of 2bU! is published in partnership with Dove. Dove broadens the standards of beauty and improve self-esteem in order to inspire more women to care for themselves. Make a contribution to the Dove Self-Esteem Fund by purchasing Dove products. Proceeds from the fund are used to run BodyTalk, a self-esteem workshop to help young girls develop a positive self-image.



DOVE RECENTLY LAUNCHED THE SELF-Esteem Fund, which will be used to run BodyTalk Workshops for young girls. This time, we want to read your self-esteem story.

Share your story. Use the following questions as a guide.

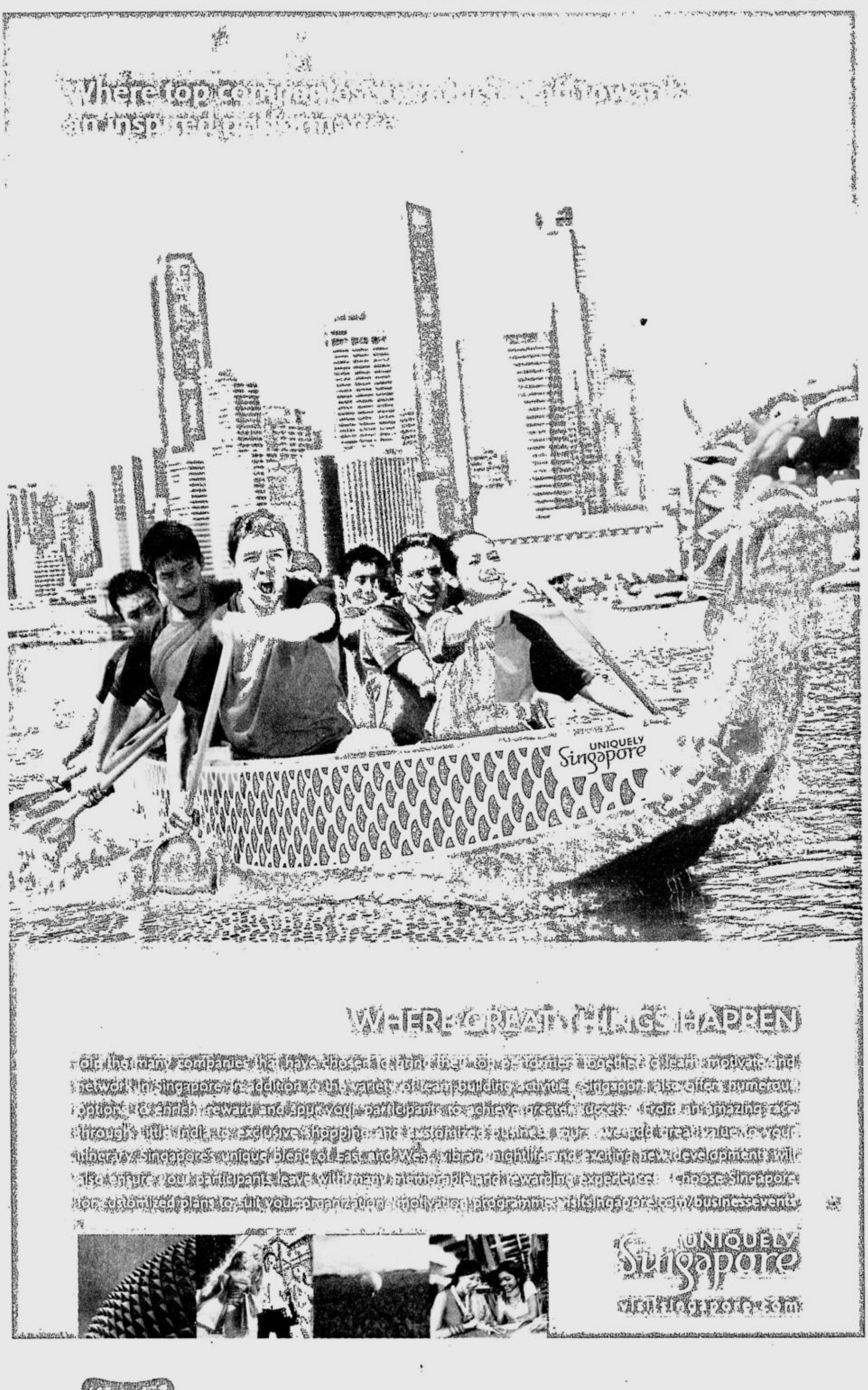
Tell us about your childhood beauty insecurity. How did it develop? Did it make an impact on your self-confidence, your ability to reach your goals and maximize your potential? How did caring for yourself help you overcome your hang-ups? Do you have tips for building a positive self-image?

2bU! and Dove will be running the Self-Esteem Chronicles for the next eight weeks, until March 14. One story will be chosen each week. Deadline of entries is every Saturday. Essays must be a maximum of 4,000 characters.

If your story is selected, it will be published in 2bU! and you will receive Dove gift packs and a limited-edition Dove Statement Tee designed by Kate Torralba.

Don't forget to choose which shirt statement you want ["A dark child can brighten your day"; "A chubby kid can live large"; "A short child can stand tall"; "100% real beauty"; and which size you will need: "I'm petite and a big dreamer" (bust: 26-28 inches); "I'm somewhere in between, but just as sweet" (29-32 inches); "I'm big and beautiful" (33-36 inches)].

E-mail your entries to selfesteemchronicles@gmail.com along with your name, age, contact info, school/office.



Dream girl

FORMER "AMERICAN IDOL" contestant Jennifer Hudson makes an Oscar-nominated acting debut with an already acclaimed performance in "Dreamgirls."

The film adaptation of the Tony award-winning 1981 musical follows the rise and fall of a Supremes-esque girl singing group in the '60s. Despite Beyoncé Knowles serving as the Diana Ross counterpart, the play and film is really about Hudson's character, Effie White, the "heavier" singer who looks less glamorous but is the one girl of the group with real talent.

Hudson talks about the film, her career and life after "American Idol."

Jamie Foxx has said that whole experience, where Simon criticized you so harshly in front of America, prepared you for this.

Definitely. I give that experience credit, and I feel everything prepares you for the next. It helped make Effie and my stories parallel. I definitely see similarities in it.

You knew you could sing. But did you know you could be the emotional anchor of a film?

I did not know that! I was learning it as I went along. I didn't even realize that was what I was doing. I just felt like I needed to be that voice for Florence Ballard, who Effie is based on. That was part of my motivation.

You said that when you watched old clips of the Supremes, you would see how Florence would be aloof from the others...

Yeah. I mean, just her disposition, and the way she would separate herself from the rest of the Supremes. The look on her face of not being happy with being there—but knowing from the research and the background... you can only imagine what she was feeling.

I felt like that's what "And I Am Telling You" is about, and what Effie storming out is about. It's how her fans felt she should have reacted, because if you go look at a picture or even a clip of one of their performances, you would say: "What's wrong with her?" without knowing the story. And that, I think, is Effie screaming out.

"And I Am Telling You" in the film is an incredibly powerful moment. When you're doing a show, you'll sing a song like that once a night on stage. When you're making a movie, you're probably singing that song again and again all day. What kind of emotional place do you get to?

You get to a desperate emotional place! I actually ended up doing "And I Am Telling You," "I'm Changing" and "One N.ght Only" all in one week.

Like I say, it was a bit of everything... and of course "And I Am Telling You" is all led by emotion, and that's what I sing by—it's what I'm trained to sing by. I need to understand it and know what I'm saying and know what I'm trying to get across, and I just found the emotion for that.

Jamie also said that you're country. He said you're nice country and that you had to get to a place where you could be a little bit of a diva.

Bill said I was just a little too sweet and soft-spoken, and wanted me to be more aggressive. They wanted me to be more demanding, like Effie—to take charge and be that diva that she is. I had to go through Diva 101, rehearse having that attitude, walking in when I felt like it, walking out when I felt like it, saying what I wanted to say. Stuff like that.

You went from a size 10/12 to a 14/16 for the part?

Jennifer's a very healthy eater. I only eat chicken, fish and turkey, no fried foods. I don't even drink soda. But for Effie I had to change it a little bit and eat cookies and cakes and pies at all wee hours of the night, and I got away with it, because I had to gain and maintain the weight. I found the biggest challenge, more than gaining or losing weight, was to maintain the weight. Anytime I lost an inch, [wardrobe] was like, 'Nope, you gotta go back up.' It was hard because of all the choreography and the busy schedule.

Whose decision was it on how big Effie should be?

You just needed to be able to perceive the difference between Effie's image and and the other girl's image. I don't think it was so much about 'Effie needs to be a size 16/18 and 200 pounds'—it was just so you could show the difference.

Was one of the biggest sacrifices for you in this film wearing the outfit in the "Heavy" number?

Yes! That outfit was the worst thing in my life. Oh my God, I don't know what they were thinking! It felt like I was in a box, and then I had these fishnets on—and when your legs are thick and rub together, fishnets don't feel so good!

Then I had these shoes that were custom-made. Don't ever get no shoes that are custom-made to fit your feet! Honey, it took at least four people to put the shoes on my feet. That's how uncomfortable [it is]... my feet still don't look right. That was the most painful, and that was our longest night of shooting.

What was your favorite time period and look for Effie?

I liked Effie when she went through her trying times, because it was really real. Of course, we love the glamour and the glitz, but I loved the realness, getting stripped down to the lowest of the low. That was one of my favorites.

Was this role a tribute to any of the big-voiced women who came before you, like Aretha Franklin?

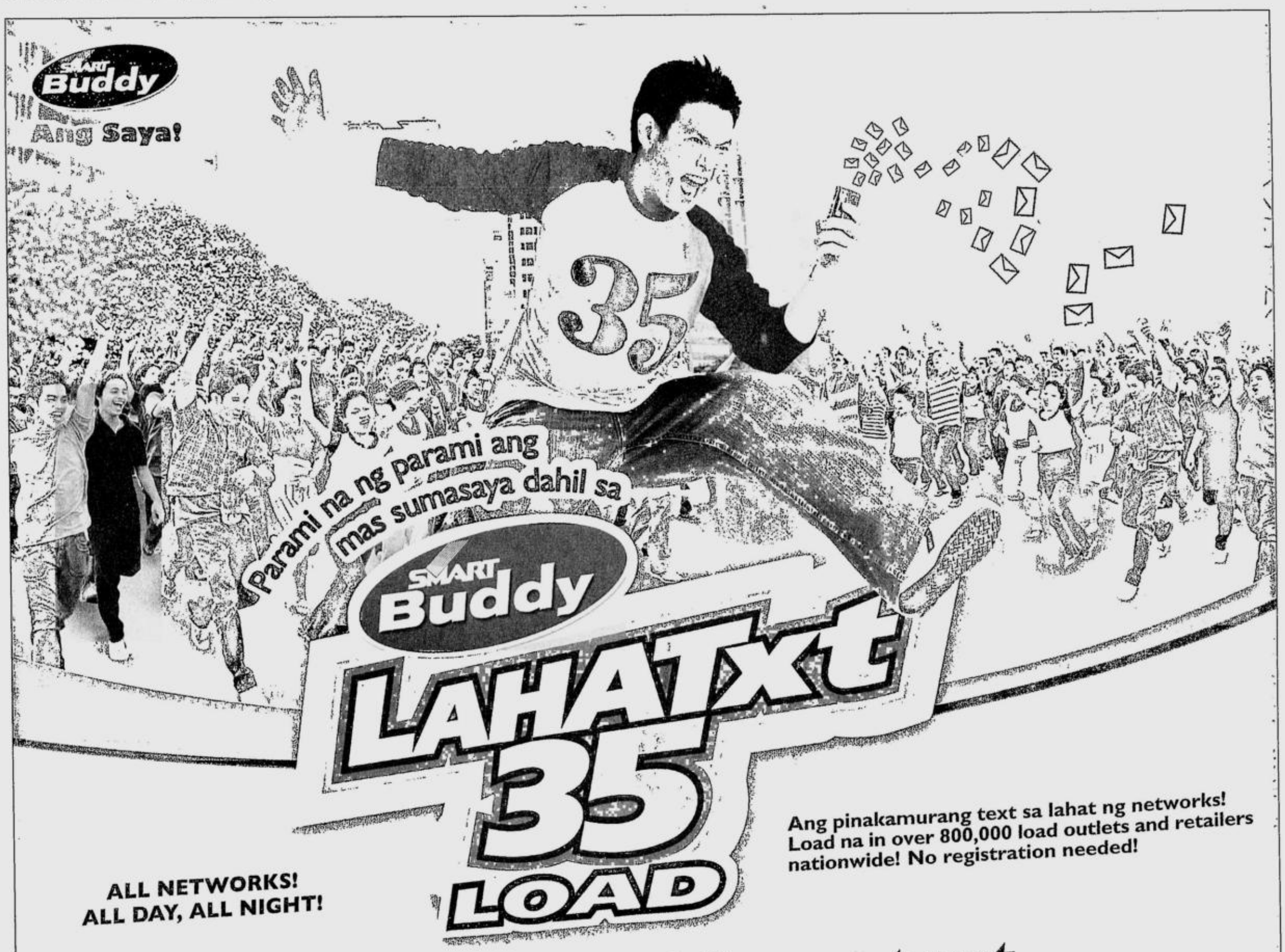
In researching Effie, the first thing that came to mind was Aretha Franklin. I feel like the idea for this voice came from Aretha, and when Jennifer Holliday got a hold of it she took it to a whole other place. But I patterned and dedicated each songs to my favorite female artists. "Move," if you listen to it, is Aretha style, has an Aretha feel. I used some of the licks she would throw into a song. "I'm Changing," it's Jennifer Holliday. And "One Night Only" is my dedication to Whitney.

Is it movies for you next, or is it stage?

Next for me is recording my album, and then after that I want to do more movies. Later down the line I would love to do theater.

JENNIFER Hudson has been raking in awards for her role as Effie White in "Dreamgirls." Will she win an Oscar as well?

'American Idol' loser is a winner in most Oscar-nominated film this year



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Asian girl power

The Asian version of the 'Amazing Race' yields a feat—the first all-female team winner in the history of the reality TV franchise

WINNING "The Amazing Race Asia" is a life-changing experience for Zabrina Fernandez and Joe Jer Tee. "It has given me the confidence to believe that I am stronger than I think, that I have more willpower than I could possibly imagine," says Joe Jer.

By Nino Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

IF THERE IS ONE THING WE can all learn from Malaysians Zabrina Fernandez, 26, and Joe Jer Tee, 29, it is that it pays to know what you're getting yourself into.

When the self-professed reality TV buffs joined "The Amazing Race Asia," they really, really knew what they were getting themselves into. Not only are they hardcore fans of the reality TV genre, they are particularly huge loyalists of "The Amazing Race" as well.

"We know the game," said Zabrina during the auditions. "We really know it. We watch it all the time. We take note of all the things that go wrong and right in the game."

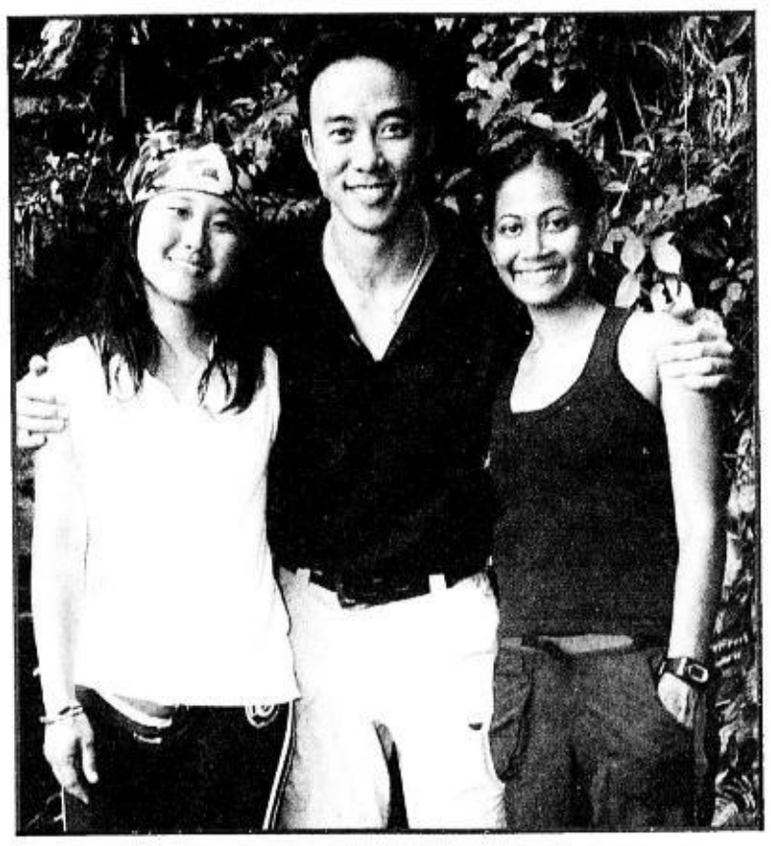
And it looks as if they did a very good job taking notes, doing the right thing and avoiding the mistakes, since Zabrina and Joe Jer just made TV history by being the first-ever all-female team to win the grand prize in the history of "The Amazing Race" franchise!

In the finale shown on action and adventure channel AXN last Feb. 1, the last three teams standing—Zabrina and Joe Jer; Andrew Tan and Syeon Park of Malaysia; and Sandy Sydney and Francesca von Etzdorf of Hong Kong—came full circle as they left Dubai and headed for Kuala Lumpur, which was also the start of the race, before darting to the last destination—Kuching, Malaysia. It was in Kuching where Zabrina and Joe Jer made their final sprint to the pitstop to secure their title as winners of the first-ever "The Amazing Race Asia" and take home the US$100,000 prize.

After 15 cities in 24 days and traveling over 36,000 kilometers, an emotional Zabrina said: "Winning the race is great in so many ways—who can complain about the money?—and also we never in a million years thought we would be the first all-female team to win 'The Amazing Race.' We made history!"

She added: "Joe Jer and I were in disbelief but we were also sad at the same time. We enjoyed the journey so much that it was sad to step on that mat, knowing it was going to be the last time."

And it's not only the viewers who were bowled over by the girls. Even host Allan Wu had some nice words to say about the female duo. "A lot of us were rooting for Zabrina and Joe Jer to win the race not only because they would make history by becoming the first all-female team to ever win the race, but simply because they really beat the odds to be one of the final three teams. Also, they just stayed positive the entire time through thick and thin," said the "eliminator."



HOST Allan Wu says of the female duo: "They just stayed positive the entire time through thick and thin."

INQUIRER 2bU! recently had a chat with Joe Jer and we found out all about what she plans to do with the cash prize, why she doesn't get recognized even after winning and who she thought were good-looking among all the contestants.

Did you actually think you'd win?

No, our main plan was to not get eliminated during every leg. Our next goal was to be the all-girl team standing last.

What do you think made you win?

We were smart. We thought logically. We didn't react irrationally.

What is one thing you proved when you won?

You don't need a big man to push you. I have incredible willpower. I have loving family and friends.

Except for you guys, who deserved to win?

Andrew and Syeon. They were the team to beat. They had everything going on for them.

Did you and Zabrina ever feel like giving up?

Not at all. We are stubborn by nature. Giving up was the last thing on our mind.

What's your advice to future contestants?

Just enjoy every moment of it.

Did you hear any bad comments about you from others?

We played the game as underdogs and people have a thing for underdogs. We were nice to everyone.

Who were the biggest threats?

All of them were strong. Probably Andrew and Syeon.

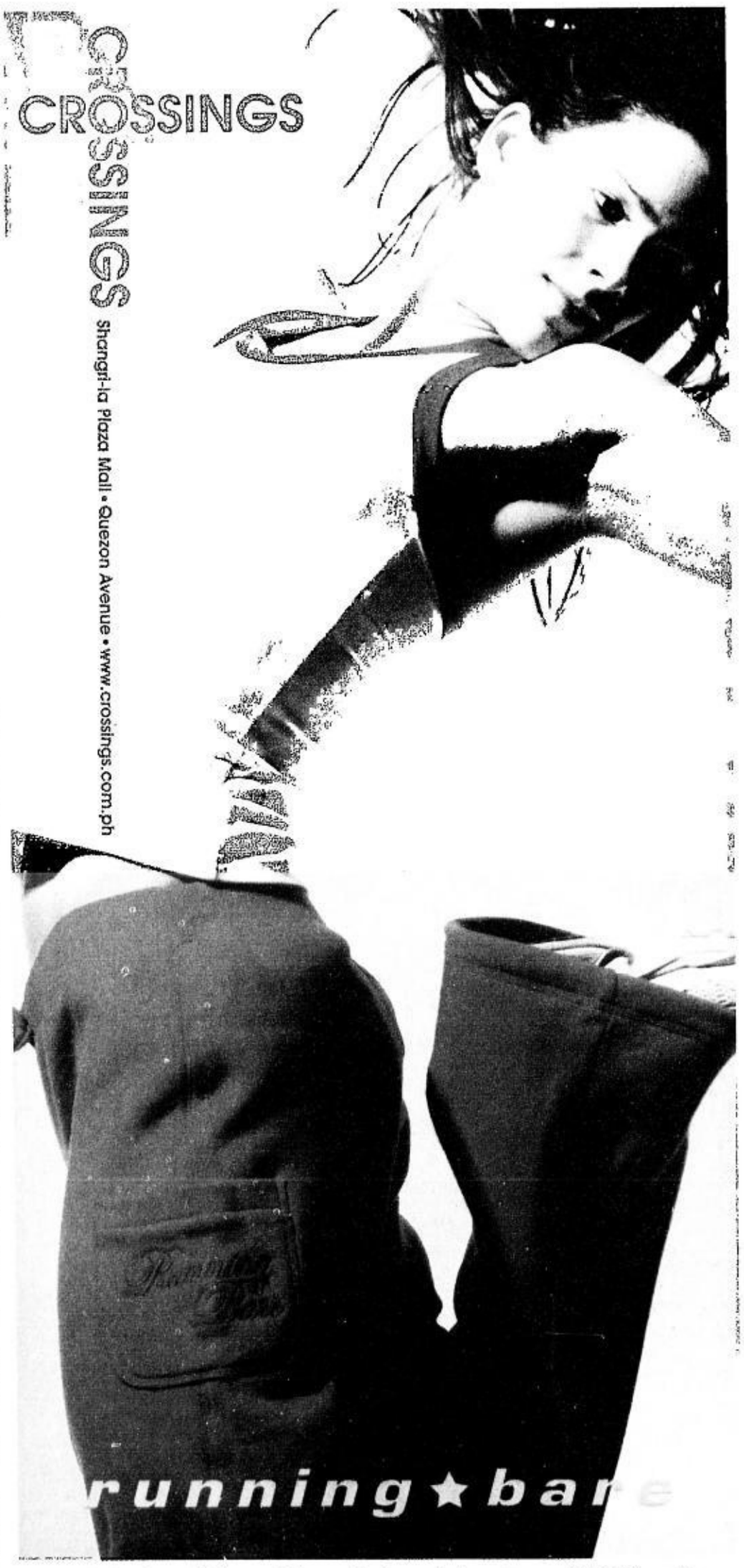
Who is the cutest competitor?

Syeon is cute. Jacq is cute.

But those are all girls! Name me a cute male contestant.

Sahran, he's handsome. My mother said

ASIAN/ D4



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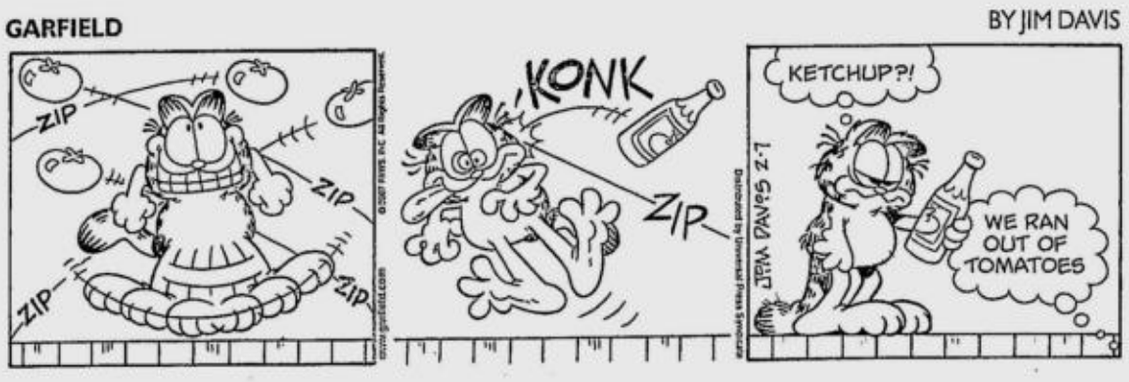
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-0080 Series of 2007

Get this JLo Seamless Thong or Bikini for a minimum purchase of P1,500 (single receipt) of regular items from Jlo Lingerie. Promo Period: February 7 - 28, 2007

Per DTI-NCR Permit No. A3-0081 Series of 2007

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

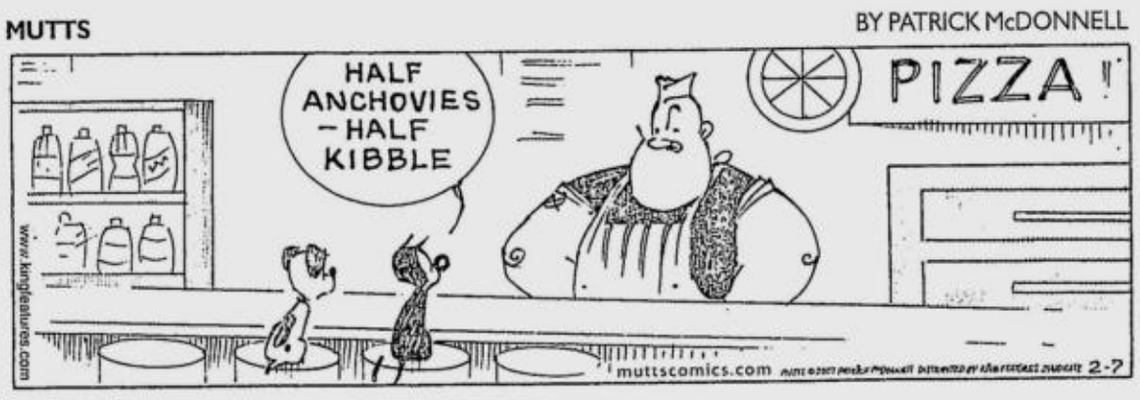


A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT

PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL



LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

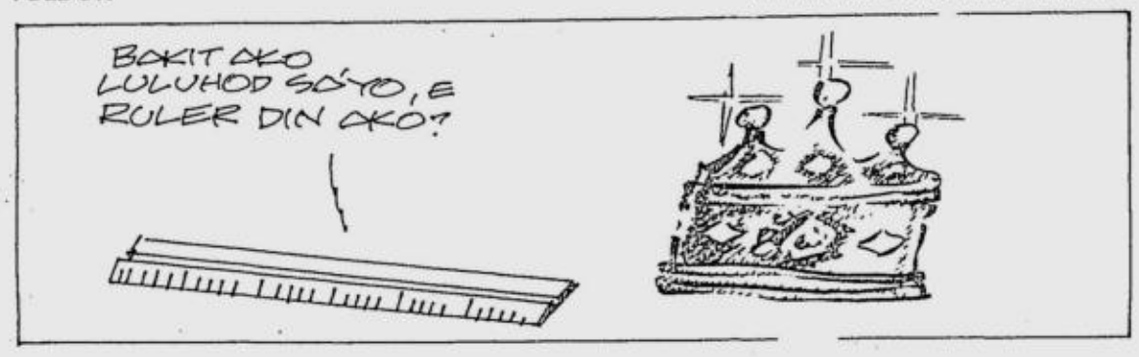
DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

REMINDER: HUWAG NA HUWAG PUMASOK SA ISANG THEOLOGICAL DEBATE KUNG ANG MAKAKALABAN MO AY SI DR. BRUCE BANNER. ALAM MO NAMAN KASI ANG MANGYAYARI KUNG SIYA AY MAPIKON

KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

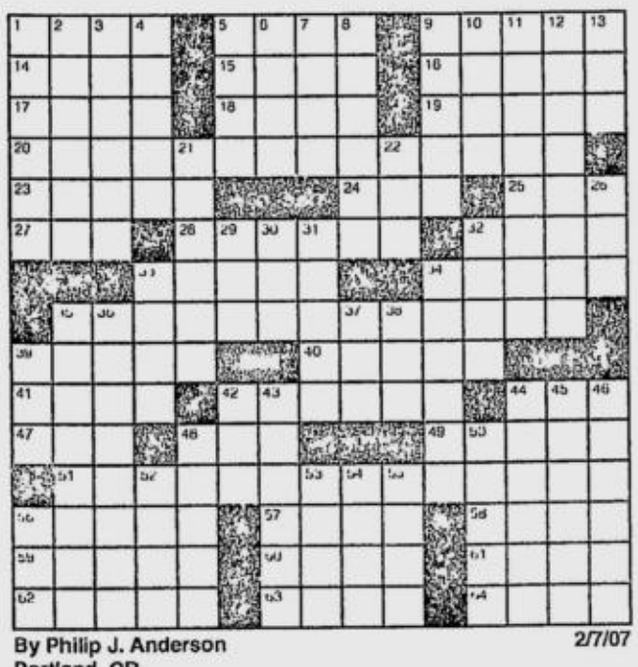
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Philip J. Anderson
Portland, OR

2/7/07

ACROSS
1 Bacon quantity
5 Farrow and Sara
9 Cinnamon or nutmeg
14 Forest scent
15 Ms. Bombeck
16 __-Dixon line
17 Actress Paquin
18 Nobelist Bellow
19 Screen images
20 Brush up on crowd control?
23 Spicy sauce
24 Final degree
25 Ex-QB Dawson
27 Hesitant syllables
28 Pill
32 Bart's sister
33 French capital in a WWI song
34 "The Divine Comedy" poet
35 Brush up on boxing skills?
39 Final Four games
40 Jose's farewell
41 Yikes!
42 Gofer's assignment
44 German article
47 GI Jill, once
48 Hit the slopes
49 Mexican plain
51 Brush up on philosophy?
56 Pac. pact
57 Strong wind
58 Mint family plant
59 Mr. Addams on TV
60 Toledo's lake
61 Superman's alias
62 Distrustful
63 South African currency
64 Miss in Sp.

DOWN
1 Meager
2 Elongated
3 Chronological records
4 Sweat droplets
5 Fine screen
6 "Dies __"
7 Siberian river
8 Medicinal solution
9 Buffalo Bob or Bubba
10 Burrowing rodent
11 Tightly folded rock layers
12 Struggles for superiority
13 Printer's measures
21 Turkic tribesmen
22 Ex-Giant Mel
26 Scot's refusal
29 Prince Valiant's son
30 Wager
31 "The Merry Widow" composer
32 Indy circuits
33 Bill stamp
34 Bit of scribbling
35 Lawyer-speak
36 Get too thin
37 Author LeShan
38 __ Tin Tin
39 Put in stitches
42 Make do
43 Look-alike
44 One of Santa's team
45 Consecrate with oil
46 "Moonlight __"
48 Unemotional
50 Deficiencies
52 Recipe directive
53 Neighbor of Twelve Oaks
54 Ken or Lena
55 Marsh growth
56 Actor Mineo

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved

P	E	D	A	L		D	U	S	K	S		M	E	T
A	C	U	R	A		O	S	T	I	A		E	M	U
W	O	M	E	N	S	S	U	I	T	S		N	I	B
E	L	M		D	E	S	A	L	T		A	S	T	A
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			R	U	L	E		S	O	A	R	E	R	S
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P	A	S		L	E	D	T	O		R	A	K	E	S

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2/7/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You want to make the world a better place. Many of you have verbal or literary skills that you can use to promote social causes. You're a good judge of people. You value family and home, and you choose your friends carefully. In the coming year, you'll wrap up something you've been involved with for about nine years. Time to move on. **Birthdate of:** Steve Nash, NBA MVP; Ashton Kutcher, actor; Charles Dickens, novelist.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Get out and do something different today. You feel restless! You need to feed your hunger for adventure and new experiences. You want something exciting to happen.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): A new friend could enter your life today. Existing friends might also surprise you. Expect bizarre behavior from someone—that's for sure!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Expect a few surprises from authority figures today. The source could be a parent, your boss, a teacher or even the police. Keep your head down and your powder dry.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): This is a perfect day to explore new subjects, philosophies, religions or ideas. Unexpected opportunities to travel or to further your education are likely. Grab them!

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Gifts, goodies and cold, hard cash can come to you from unexpected sources today. Your partner might suddenly get a raise or a bonus. This also applies to surprise inheritances.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): New people could come into your life today. Something very unusual connected with a close friend or partner might happen. Expect a few surprises.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Staff shortages, computer crashes and power outages are just some reasons that today will be memorable at work! You might also learn news about an unexpected raise or promotion.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Love affairs and flirtations are exciting today! New romance could enter your life. Accept party invitations. Make spontaneous plans for a mini-vacation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Stock the fridge. Surprise company might arrive at your doorstep. The purchase of beautiful or modern items could please you. You might also bring home something that is quite high-tech.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Be extra-careful walking or driving today. This is a mildly accident-prone day. However, what is more likely is that people will just surprise you.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might find money today; you might lose money. Surprises connected with finances and shopping are certainly likely. New job opportunities are possibly waiting in the wings.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel restless, creative and ready for adventure today. Expect the unexpected. Some of you will also feel rebellious and highly independent now. You want to do your own thing!

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

		2	5				8	6
	8					5		
1					8			
8					2			
4	5	1			7	2	6	
2			8		6			3
5			6		9			7
7			4		1			5
	9	8				4	1	

Difficulty Level ★★★

2/07

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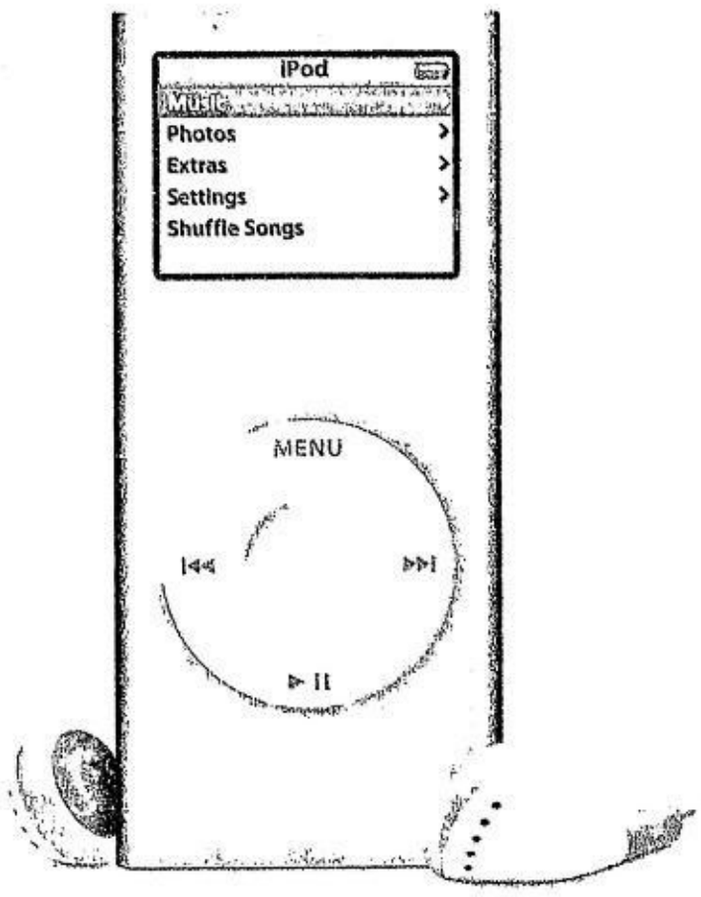
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	7	9	6	3	4	8	2	1
2	4	1	8	7	5	9	6	3
6	3	8	2	1	9	5	4	7
7	1	6	4	5	8	3	9	2
8	5	2	9	6	3	1	7	4
3	9	4	7	2	1	6	5	8
1	2	7	3	9	6	4	8	5
9	8	5	1	4	2	7	3	6
4	6	3	5	8	7	2	1	9

Difficulty Level ★★



Win an iPod Nano for your loved one!

Skip the mix tape and load this baby up with the soundtrack to your love story

THE ERA OF mix tapes is over. This coming Valentine's Day, Apple and 2bU! want you to present your loved one with the gift of technology, music and romance—by filling any of the iPod incarnations with songs that speak of your relationship.

Apple will be giving away two silver 2-gig iPod nanos to two lucky 2bU! readers.

All you have to do is tell us about 10 songs that you will include in your beloved's playlist and why. Send your list to us along with a photo of the two of you together. Creativity is always a plus. E-mail your entries to contest2bu @inquirer.com.ph along with your name, age, school/office and contact info.

Winning entries will be published in 2bU! in the next two weeks.

Deadline of entries is Feb. 11.

Almost winners

They were all set to win the competition but they crashed and burned on the last leg

ALMOST, but not quite. Andrew Tan and Syeon Park

By Nino Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

PLACING THIRD ISN'T THAT BAD, BUT for "The Amazing Race Asia" contestants Andrew Tan, 26, and Syeon Park, 28, it's really, really bad.

After all, it seemed as if they were all set to win the competition. Their positioning was really good for the most part. Their fellow contestants also called the boyfriend-girlfriend team "the team to beat." And, of course, they had a huge time advantage, coming in first in the previous leg of the race. Sadly, they lost out at the most crucial hour trying to find their way in Kuching.

Despite being devastated by their loss, Syeon now looks at their performance differently.

"It is a game that really plays with your mentality. If you keep winning every leg and come in first or second in every leg, you naturally tend to become confident and there is a higher chance of being careless. We did really well all throughout the race and came first in the second last leg. Maybe if we did not come in first then, things could have been different. It is a game that requires 1/3 intelligence, 1/3 fitness and strength, and 1/3 luck."

SYEON'S advice to future contestants: "Never give up. Don't be overconfident."

Now that the race has ended, the cute couple has gone back to their normal lives. Malaysian Andrew is once again working as a managing director, while Syeon—an Australian of Korean descent—is still busy as a business development manager.

Here's an excerpt of a phone conversation 2bU! had with the team that almost won.

Are you still together?

Andrew Tan (AT): We're still together.

Aren't you guys going to get married soon?

AT: We don't have money to get married!

Syeon Park (SP): Hahahahaha.

Do other people try to ask you out on dates?

AT: We're together all the time so…

Who's the most attractive competitor?

AT: She's going to say Allan! I think Francesca.

SP: Andrew was right about Allan Wu! Sahil was quite cute.

Should boyfriend-girlfriend teams join?

SP: I think you have to go with someone very much like you.

Did you think you'd win?

AT: We were hoping to. It was disappointing when we didn't.

SP: We performed really well. We thought we'd win.

Did you ever feel like giving up?

AT: No.

SP: No way.

How are you better than Sandy and Francesca?

AT: I don't think we're better.

What's the best lesson you learned from the competition?

AT: Always give 100-percent focus. We kind of broke down during the last leg.

SP: Never give up. Don't be overconfident.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

Asian . . .

From page D1

he's cute.

Is Allan Wu cute?

Of course! He can get away with anything.

What's next for you guys?

I want to continue traveling.

Are you famous in Malaysia?

Zabrina is more famous than me!

Did you discover something new about each other?

We started talking about our personal lives more.

Are there more guys who approach you now?

Not many people recognize me because I lost more weight. I looked worse on TV!

What do you plan to do with the cash prize that you got?

No direct plan. Travel some more!

Crave more of "The Amazing Race Asia"? Catch a special episode, "The Amazing Race Asia Memories," on Feb. 8, 9 p.m.

E-mail the author at marksablan_2bu@yahoo.com

LOVE CONQUERS MALL

Celebrate Valentine's Day with your loved ones at the SM Mall of Asia!

LOVE IS IN THE AIR
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LOVAPALOOZA
Feb. 10, 6pm onwards / North Open Lot

THREE FOR LOVE! A VALENTINE CONCERT AT THE SM MALL OF ASIA
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VALENTINES DAY PYROMUSICAL
Feb. 14, 9:30pm (immediately after the concert) / Seaside Boulevard

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ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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OPENING TODAY

Compound

Stars John Arcilla, Janet Russ, Jake Macapagal, Liza Diño
Directed by Will Fredo

Violence and paranoia erupt in a "seemingly idyllic" compound after a shabu addict (Arcilla) and his vain wife (Russ) take in a bisexual tenant (Macapagal). Described as a "sexy psychological thriller" by Fil-Am Vision TV.com, Fredo's debut film premiered at the Cleveland International Film Festival last year, where it was hailed as "perfectly unexpected … not to be missed." Paul Daza of the INQUIRER calls it "Melrose Place" as seen through the unflinching eyes of David Lynch and Mike de Leon." Exclusively in IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria.

Curse of the Golden Flower

Stars Chow Yun Fat, Gong Li, Jay Chou, Jin Chen
Directed by Zhang Yimou

Set in 928 AD during the Tang dynasty, this Chinese epic unveils the schemes and secrets that drive a wedge between a merciless emperor (Chow) and his ravishing empress (Gong). Jeannette Catsoulis of New York Times.comments: "[The director] achieves a kind of operatic delirium … until the line between tragedy and black comedy is all but erased." Robert Koehler of Variety scoffs: "[It's] Yimou's strangest and most troubled film … quasi-Shakespearean."

The History Boys

Stars Stephen Campbell Moore, Samuel Barnett, Dominic Cooper, Samuel Anderson, James Corden
Directed by Nicholas Hytner

Based on Alan Bennett's smash play, the 1980s campus drama focuses on eight Yorkshire students being primed for Oxford and Cambridge. Peter Travers of Rolling Stone raves: "[Although] the film can't hide its stage origins … Bennett's dialogue sparkles and skewers with killer wit." "[It's an] exuberantly free-spirited but faithful movie version … deeply affectionate yet biting." Exclusively at Ayala Cinemas.

The Holiday

Stars Cameron Diaz, Kate Winslet, Jude Law, Jack Black
Directed by Nancy Meyers

Upwardly mobile and yet romance-challenged, two bachelorettes (Diaz and Winslet) find love while on vacation in London and Los Angeles. Claudia Puig of USA Today commends that it "doesn't feel cloyingly sweet … despite its overt sentimentality and fairy-tale premise." Ruthe Stein of San Francisco Chronicle calls it "the most love-centric movie since 'Love Actually.' It suffers from dreary predictability."

Hannibal Rising

Stars Gaspard Ulliel, Gong Li, Rhys Ifans, Dominic West
Directed by Peter Webber

Based on Thomas Harris' novel "Behind the Mask," this prequel traces the youth of Hannibal Lecter and unravels the mystery of the serial killer's madness. Rich Cline of Shadows on the Walls.com says it's "good freak-out fun for genre fans … [with] buckets of operatic grisliness, much of which is gratuitous and sadistic … [but] ridiculous touches help undercut the pretentious script." WorstPreviews.com is unimpressed: "[The story] sounds like a revenge movie, without the inventiveness of 'Kill Bill' ... worse than 'Basic Instinct 2.'"

The Messengers

Stars Kristen Stewart, Dylan McDermott, Penelope Ann Miller, John Corbett
Directed by Oxide Pang Chun and Danny Pang

The Thai twin-filmmakers make their English-language debut with this American gothic thriller set in an isolated farm. Michael Rechtshaffen of The Hollywood Reporter complains, "It's a tepid ghost story …. surprisingly devoid of the creepy, claustrophobic atmospherics [in] the brothers' Asian work." Staci Layne Wilson of Sci-Fi Weekly says the film "delivers on jump scares … nice atmosphere and excellent cinematography augmented by a lush color palette."

Code Name: The Cleaner

Stars Cedric the Entertainer, Lucy Liu, Nicollette Sheridan, Mark Dacascos
Directed by Les Mayfield

A regular guy (Cedric) gets entangled in a government conspiracy and is pursued by spies and assassins. Wesley Morris of Boston Globe says: "It's 'Memento' for dummies . . another standard-issue bad star-vehicle action-comedy." Kyle Smith of New York Post concurs: "The pacing is as slow as cross-town traffic. The whole plot could easily fit into a 45-minute TV show. It does have a little bounce, thanks to [the lead star]."

UK critics pick Dench over Mirren

LONDON—DANIEL CRAIG WAS honored but Helen Mirren was denied on Sunday at the 34th annual Evening Standard British Film Awards.

Craig was named Best Actor for "Casino Royale," his debut outing as super-spy James Bond. Craig, who has won both critical praise and box-office favor as the first blond Bond, is also up for the Best Actor prize at next week's British Academy Film Awards.

Mirren, who is an Academy Awards favorite for her turn as Queen Elizabeth II in "The Queen," lost the Best Actress prize to Judi Dench, awarded for her portrayal of a predatory schoolteacher in "Notes on a Scandal."

The Best Film prize went to "United 93," Paul Greengrass' harrowing dramatization of the final flight of one of the planes hijacked in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Peter Morgan won Best Screenplay for two scripts—"The Queen" and "The Last King of Scotland."

Comedian Sacha Baron Cohen, creator of gauche Kazakh journalist Borat, won the Peter Sellers Award for Comedy.

Stephen Frears, director of "The Queen," received a special award "for making British film reverberate around the world." The veteran director's socially conscious films include "My Beautiful Laundrette," "Dangerous Liaisons" and "Dirty Pretty Things."

The Evening Standard awards are sponsored by London's afternoon newspaper and selected by a jury of film critics. *AP*

TWO DAMES. Judi, left and Helen

Smart Buddy Ang Saya!

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B GRLANIME2

CATEGORY: ROCK

FF RASTA

B AFRO

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1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM • THX	6 THE MESSENGER
2 THE CLEANER	7 APOCALYPTO
3 indieSine: COMPOUND	8 CHARLOTTE's WEB
4 THE HOLIDAY	9 LITTLE CHILDREN HANNIBAL RISING
5 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	10 BABEL BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

ERMITA 638-7809 to 12

1 HANNIBAL RISING	
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	5 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE CLEANER	6 THE MESSENGER
4 THE HOLIDAY	7 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

METRO EAST 682-8193 • 682-8194

1 THE CLEANER	5 THE MESSENGER
2 HANNIBAL RISING	6 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	7 APOCALYPTO
4 THE HOLIDAY	8 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

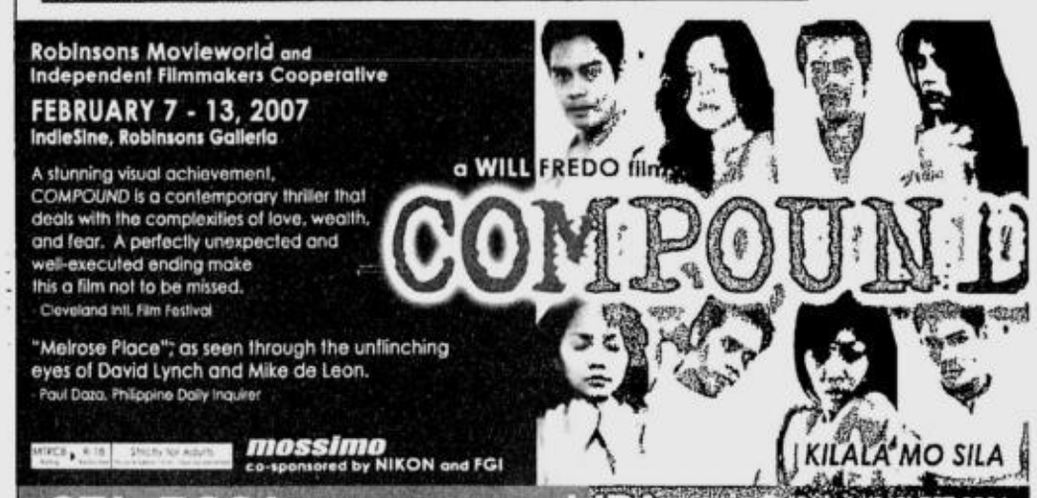
NOVALICHES 935-3229 / 935-3228-30

1 THE HOLIDAY	4 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
2 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	5 THE MESSENGER
3 APOCALYPTO	6 THE CLEANER

PIONEER 687-5378

1 THE HOLIDAY	3 THE CLEANER HANNIBAL RISING
2 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	4 THE MESSENGER

CHECKTHIS OUT ▶▶▶▶



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2 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	2 AGENT X44
3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	3 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
4 ZU WARRIORS	4 FRAGILE
ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES	

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1 THE HOLIDAY	1 THE MESSENGER
2 APOCALYPTO	2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE MESSENGER	3 CHARLOTTE's WEB
4 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	4 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

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3 THE MESSENGER	3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
4 APOCALYPTO	4 CHARLOTTE's WEB
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DID YOU KNOW...

AUSSIE singer Kylie Minogue and French Olivier Martinez have split up. It was "mutual and amicable," they said in a statement. AP

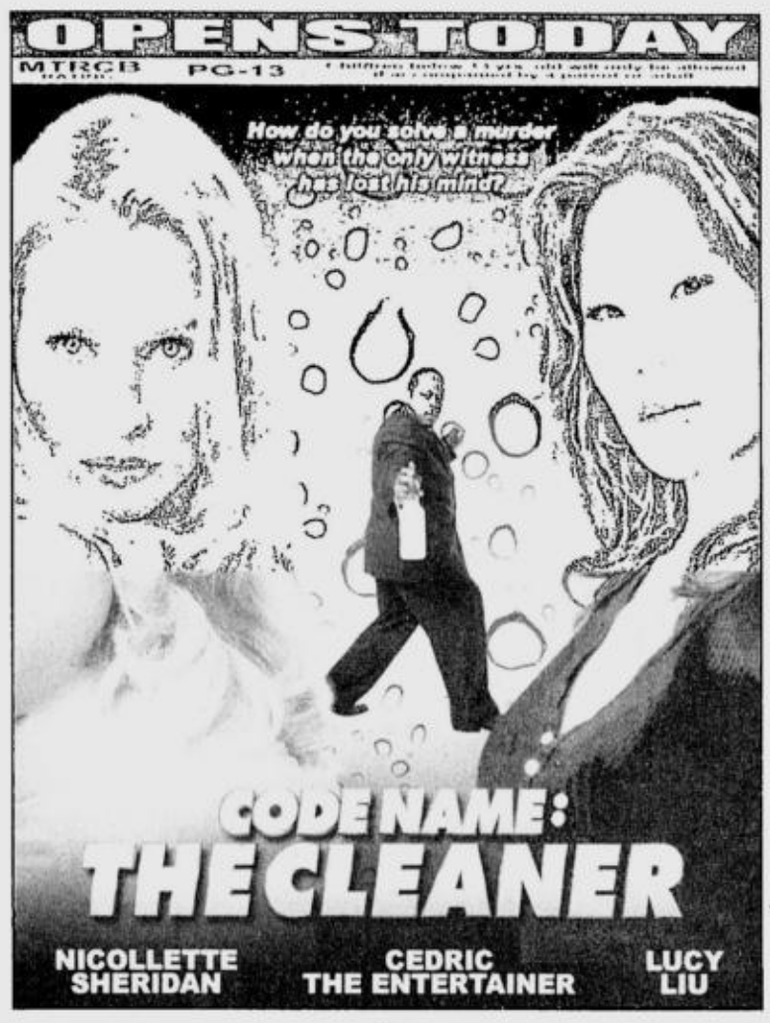
WEEKEND BOX OFFICE

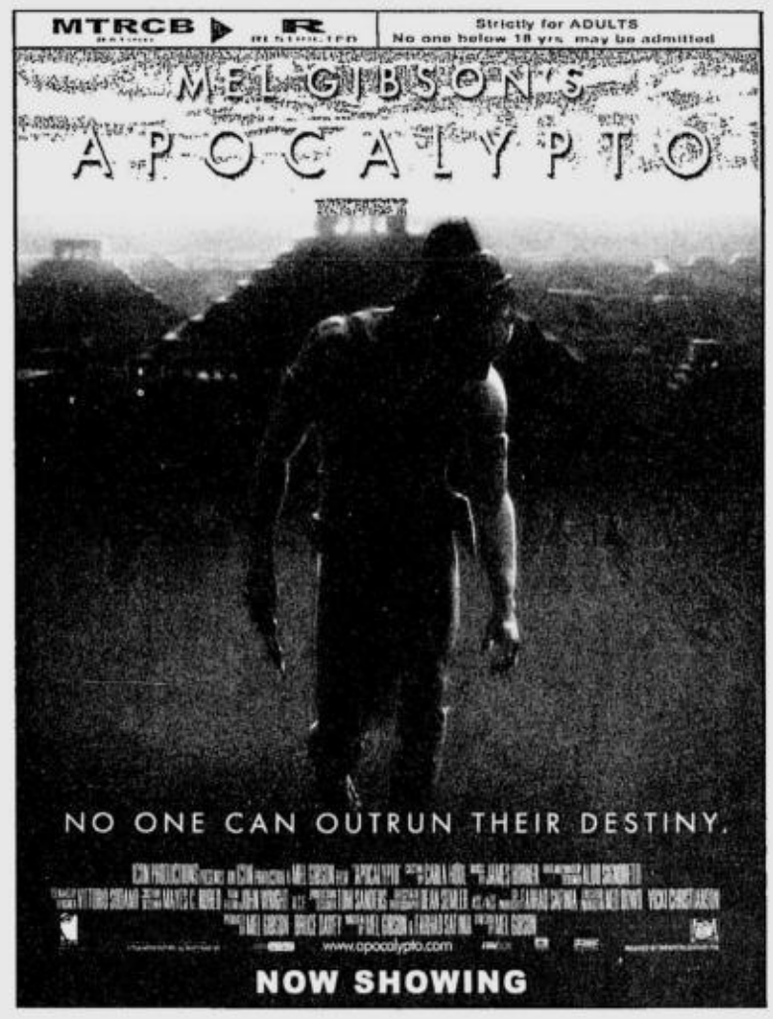
Top 10 movies at the North American box office for the three-day weekend beginning Feb 2

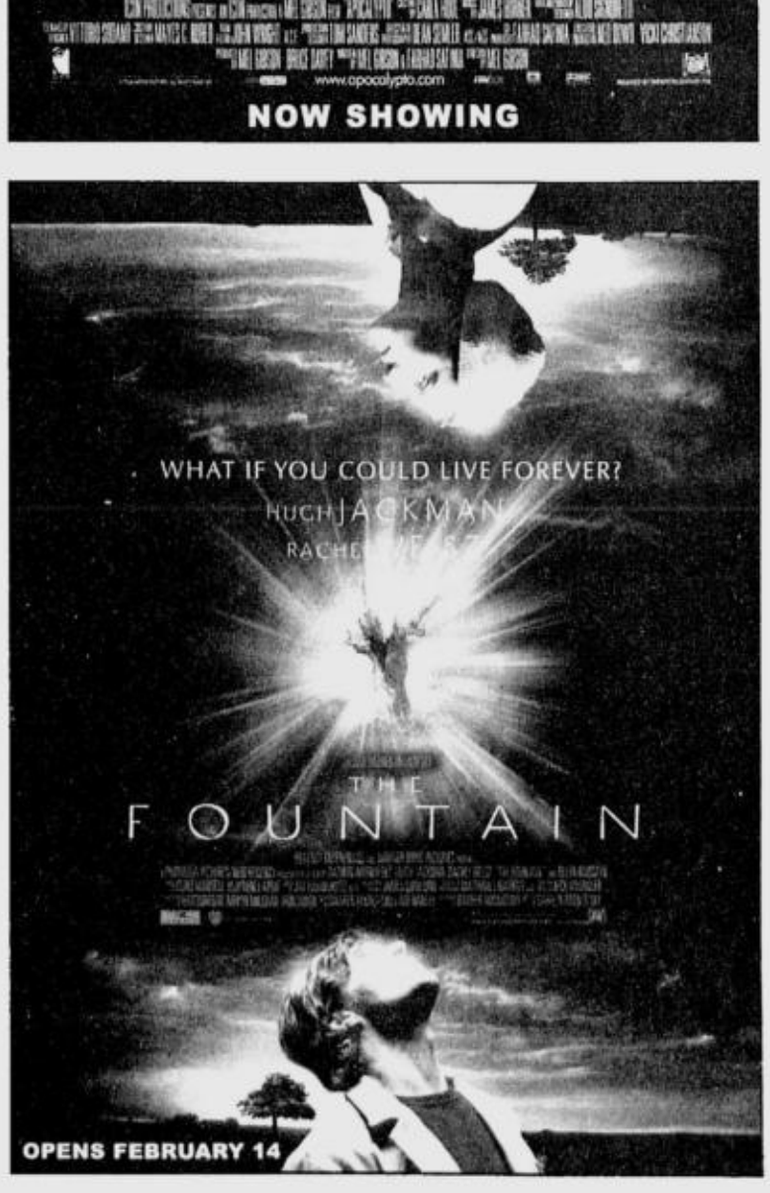
The Messengers - Sony Pictures

TW	LW	Title	Gross	WR
1	☆	The Messengers	$14.5 mln	1
2	☆	Because I Said So	$13.0 mln	1
3	1	Epic Movie	$8.2 mln	2
4	3	Night at the Museum	$6.8 mln	7
5	2	Smokin' Aces	$6.3 mln	2
6	4	Stomp the Yard	$4.2 mln	4
7	6	Dreamgirls	$4.0 mln	8
8	8	Pan's Labyrinth	$3.7 mln	6
8	7	The Pursuit of Happyness	$3.1 mln	8
10	9	The Queen	$2.7 mln	19

This Week, Last Week ☆ New release
Weeks in Release
Based on studio estimates compiled on Sunday
REUTERS







Pilita set to launch song tilt

...for composers around the world

By Nini Valera

SHE HAS RECORDED 130 ALBUMS OF THE country's greatest hits, but singer Pilita Corrales is not quite done yet.

"I am now looking for a music partner," she told INQUIRER Entertainment in an exclusive interview. "This is why I am launching my own songwriting contest."

Pilita's World Song Competition, to be managed by Alborada Productions Inc., is tapping into the vast pool of talent from around the world, according to the singer.

"I have received thousands of tapes of original compositions from composers I have met during my travels throughout the years," said Corrales. "They want me to listen to their songs and possibly record them. So I thought of coming up with this contest to harness these talents through a panel of judges that would determine which songs should be recorded."

Her own lyrics

This is no ordinary songwriting tilt, she insisted.

Corrales has written lyrics for 11 songs—in English, Spanish and Filipino. "I am looking for two different melodies to match each of the lyrics," she said. "The lyrics could also be translated into any language as long as the essence of the original is maintained."

Amateur and professional songwriters are welcome to join, she added. There is no limit to the number of entries that a composer can send. A P500 fee will be charged for each local entry; $12 for each entry from abroad.

"People value what they pay for," Corrales explained. "That's why we're charging a fee."

Each song should not be more than five minutes long, she said. Melodies will be judged on originality, musicality and appeal.

"We won't reveal the name of the judges yet," Corrales said, "but they will [all be] musicians and record executives."

The chosen works will be included in a 22-song album under an international label by 2008 before the singer embarks on a world concert tour.

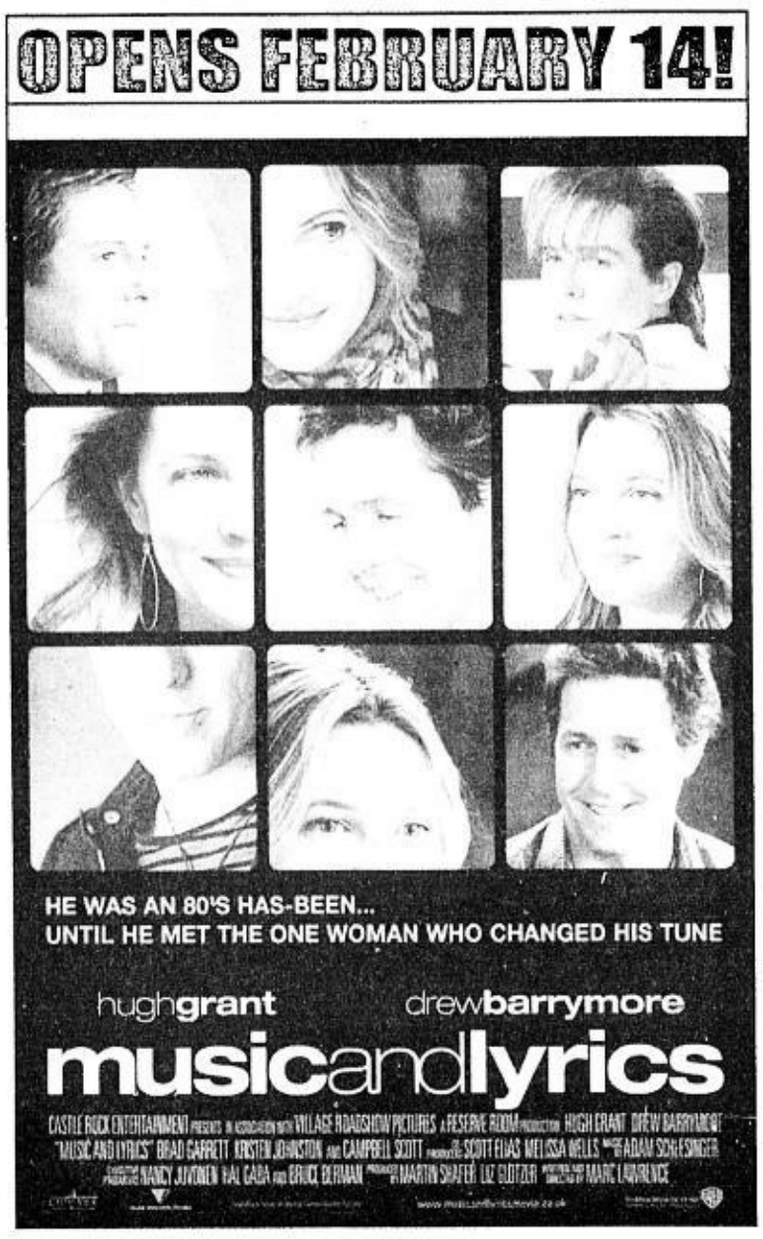
Tie-up with mayors

Corrales' husband, Carlos Lopez, said he was working on a tie-up with local mayors to sponsor composers from their cities or towns.

"This way, we can extend the reach of the competition to the poorest of the poor," Lopez said.

The mechanics of submission have yet to be finalized pending the posting of the website for the competition.

Lopez said he wants the entries to be submitted online. The application form will also be posted on the website, along with other details.



FEEDBACK

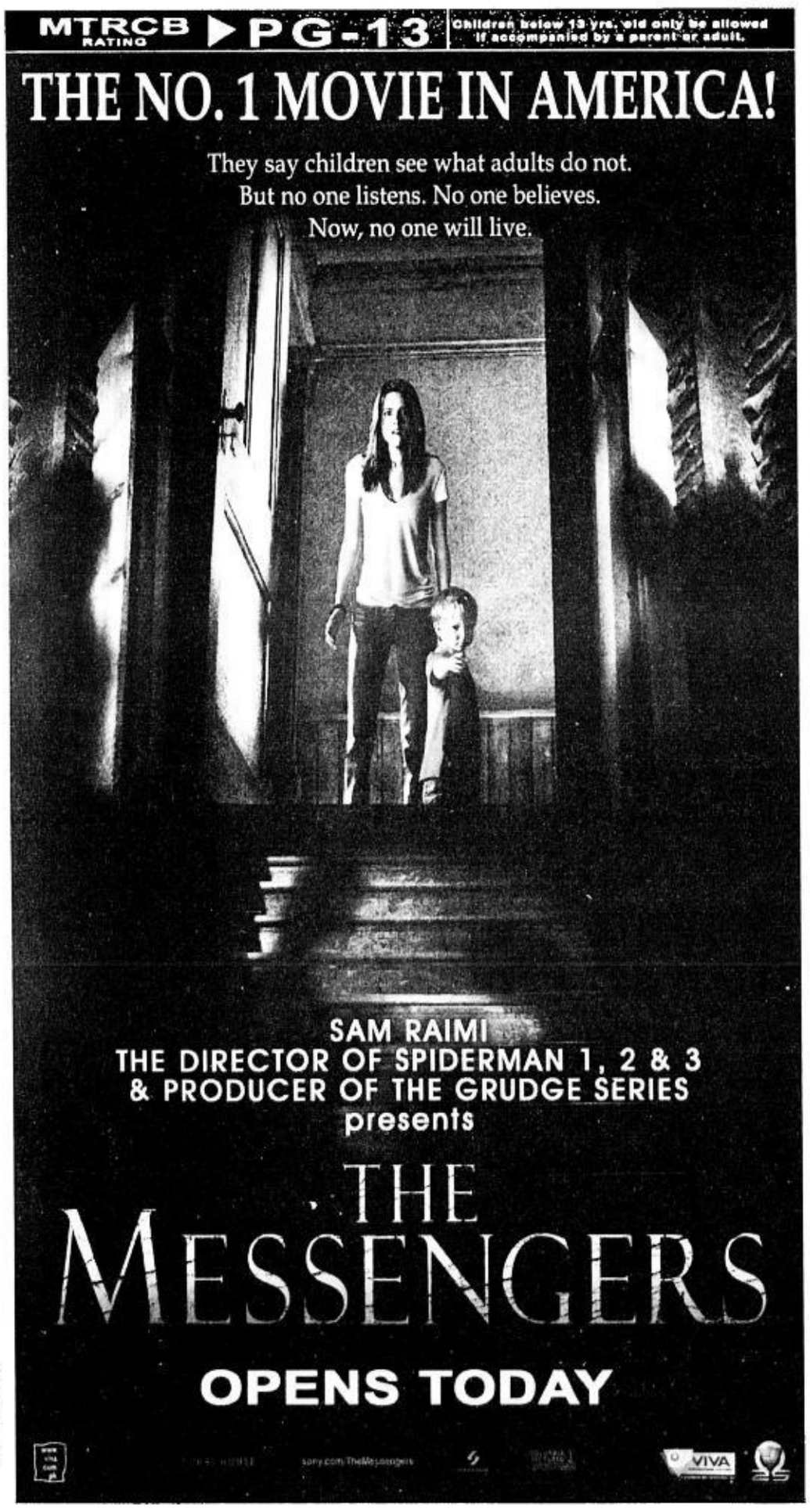
FROM Ronald Tolentino (ronaldtolentinosing@yahoo.com), 12 Lorong Singapore 398924:

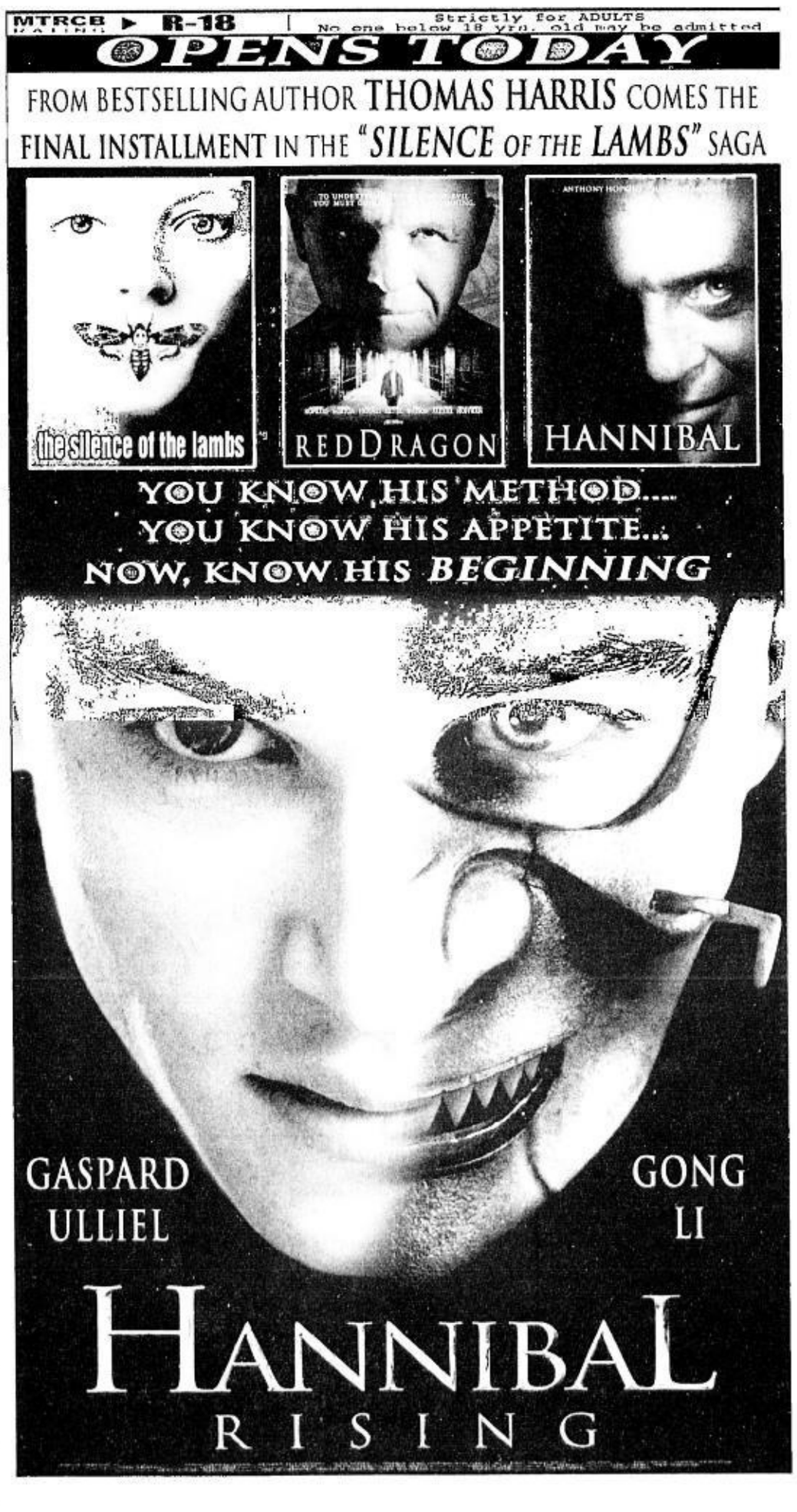
Dear Mr. Torre,

It's very clear that from the start you didn't like the Kim-Gerald tandem (unfortunately for you, they are currently the most popular local movie love team) as attested by your column titled "Second Chance" and a previous one that reviewed the movie "First Day High."

I admit that "First Day High" didn't do well as expected (but it made enough money to be considered a hit so you cannot classify this as a "second chance") for the following reasons: 1) The onslaught of Typhoon "Milenyo"; 2) She and Gerald had to share the limelight with Maja Salvador, who's not as loved by the people as Kim and others whom the producers thought the people like.

I don't know if you have noticed (and I dare you to watch even just their episode of "Maalaala Mo Kaya"). She doesn't need words to effectively communicate. She has very expressive eyes. *Alam mo ba na naninindig ang balahibo ko* when she performs because I know for sure that she will be one of our greatest actresses of all time?





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3 ERAGON
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5 HANNIBAL RISING
6 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
7 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
8 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
9 BLOOD AND CHOCOLATE
10 AGENT X44
11 THE MESSENGER
12 THE CLEANER

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10 AGENT X44
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12 ERAGON

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10 THE CLEANER

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7 AGENT X44
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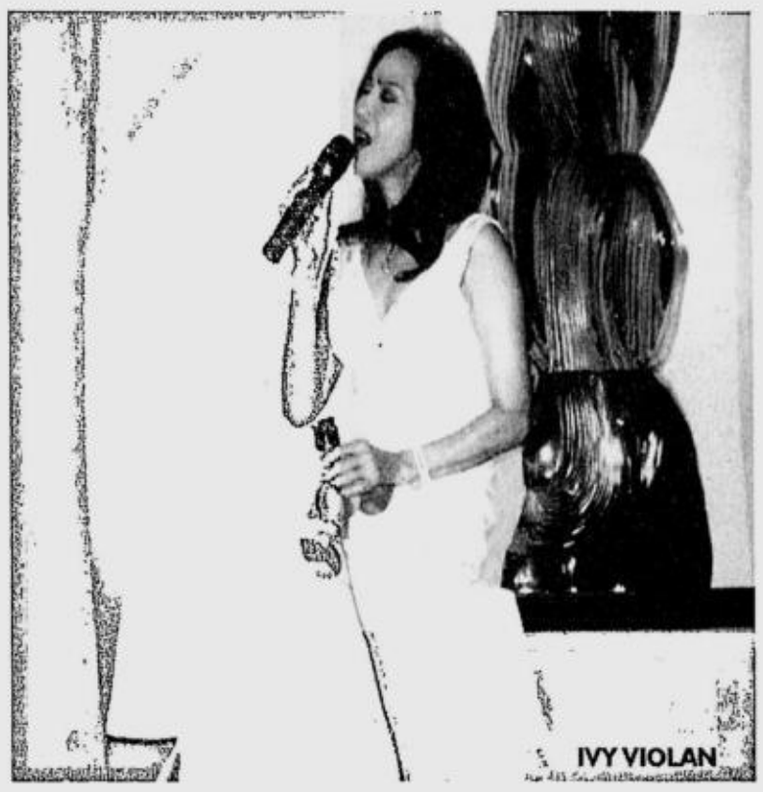
CHOOSE YOUR *Valentine* SHOW

IT'S THAT TIME OF YEAR. AND so, once again, we are helping you pick the best show for that special date, by asking the concert artists who are going onstage what they have in store for audiences.


IVY VIOLAN

Ivy Violan

"Easy to Love," Feb. 14, Rigodon Ballroom, Manila Peninsula. Call 832-2974 or 823-2977.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

I spend quality time with my extended family—a delicious dinner at home, maybe even a badminton game.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

It would have to be this coming Valentine's Day, during my concert—because I am spending it with and for someone who is so easy to love and so willing to love back.

What's an ideal Valentine's date?

For me, everyday is Valentine's Day—an ideal opportunity to live life to the fullest. Why share your love with one person on only one day, when you can do that with everyone you know everyday?

Who is your fantasy date?

Brad Pitt, Leonardo DiCaprio, Julia Roberts—they have the intellect, personality, and experience that make for an interesting evening of intelligent conversation. The fact that they look really good adds to the thrill factor!

What is the most romantic love song?

I love the romantic ballads of the '50s and '60s. Songs by Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, and Matt Monro express intense emotions that they manage to express so effortlessly.

NONOY ZUÑIGA

If you didn't have a show, who would you watch on Valentine's Day?

Miss Nanette Inventor or Mitch Valdes. I love their intelligent humor, sense of timing, and engaging personalities.

Why should we watch your show?

I will treat them to an unforgettable evening of music.

Nonoy Zuñiga

"The Love Concert," with The Silk Band; Feb. 13, 2007, Metro Bar, West Ave., Q.C.; 8:30 p.m.

When you're not doing a concert, how do you celebrate Valentine's Day?

I have a fabulous dinner with lots of desserts with my wife and kids. My family is very important to me.

What's the most romantic Valentine's Day you've ever experienced?

It would have to be the one I spent with my wife in Vienna, strolling in the biggest Rose Garden we had ever seen.

What's an ideal Valentine date?

Anywhere and anytime, as long as I am with my wife.

Who's your fantasy date?

Oprah or Hillary Clinton—both very interesting and intelligent women.

What's the most romantic love song?

"Never Ever Say Goodbye," a favorite in weddings and wedding anniversaries and, of course, Valentine shows.

If you were not doing a show, who would you watch?

Earth, Wind and Fire, or the ageless Barbra Streisand.

Why should we watch your show?

If you want to fall in love again, watch the "Love Concert!" Besides, by watching it, you will help a good cause—the milkfeeding program of Rotary District 3780 for very poor and malnourished young schoolchildren.

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Feb. 09, 2007	BIMBO CERRUDO " TONIGHT MY LOVE"	8:30 PM
Feb 13 & 14, 2007	OGIE ALCASID AND AI - AI	8:00 PM
Feb. 16 & 17, 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM

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February 11, 2007	LOVI POE "A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION"	9:00 PM
Feb. 13 & 14, 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

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MARTIN Scorsese with presenter Steven Spielberg during Saturday's rites. REUTERS

One step closer to his 1st Oscar

LOS ANGELES—MASTER MOVIE MAKER Martin Scorsese took a major step toward winning his first Oscar on Saturday when he was named the Directors Guild of America's Best Film Director for 2007 for his thriller "The Departed."

After a black-tie audience at the Guild's awards dinner gave Scorsese a standing ovation, the director declared he was surprised by the award, which is often a precursor to an Oscar.

Fifty-one of the last 57 DGA winners have gone on to win Best Director Oscars and often their works have won Best Picture awards as well.

Despite making such classic films as "Taxi Driver" and "Goodfellas," Scorsese has never won a Best Picture or Best Director Oscar.

"I was just trying to make a good picture [with 'Departed']," he told the audience. "It is the first movie I have ever done with a plot."

Reuters

Young talents in the news

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

YOUTHS HAVE A HARD TIME making it and keeping their equilibrium in the biz, because it's so charged with "user-friendly" values and cynical practices. That's why it's heartening to see some young talents either reaping acclaim, or bouncing back after a temporary setback.

The big winner this season is Abigail Breslin, the pert young star of "Little Miss Sunshine" who has been nominated for an Oscar Best Supporting Actress.

Breslin fully deserves the nomination, because her performance provided "Little Miss Sunshine" with the natural energy and freshness it needed to rise above its dysfunctional subject matter.

Breslin's achievement is even more commendable because she was acting with exceptional adult actors like Alan Arkin and Steve Carell, and yet she was able to more than hold her own in her scenes with them.

Also at the top of her young game is the 12-year-old Dakota Fanning, who continues to star in one significant production after another.

Fanning's latest starrer is "Charlotte's Web," and she shares stellar credits with the best and the biggest in the business—Julia Roberts, Robert Redford, Oprah Winfrey.

On the *other* hand, Fanning is having a hard time with her other new film, "Hounddog," in which she plays a rape victim. It's a big controversial change of pace for the young thespian, and some people are criticizing Fanning and her handlers for accepting the "edgy" assignment so early in her career.

The same thing happened to Jodie Foster when she played a precocious streetwalker in "Taxi Driver," and to Brooke Shields in a similarly daring role in "Pretty Baby." Happily, both young talents were able to weather the early criticism and have remained acclaimed actresses in their adult years.

We trust that things will also turn out well for Fanning who evinces the same depth and range of thespic talent that Foster and Shields' early performances intimated.

Finally, former child star Lindsay Lohan has been experiencing more than her share of stellar trials of late. Now branded as a party girl and drunken driver, Lohan has decided to turn her life around by going into rehab.

This is a welcome move, as the formerly sunny and bright-eyed star is too young to become a has-been due to her weakness in the seductive face of the many negative importuning of high-flying Hollywood.

Lohan can take heart by recalling the roller-coaster career of Drew Barrymore, who had even more demons to contend with and subdue, and yet was able to reestablish herself as an acclaimed film artist.

If Lohan sticks to her resolve, she can make it back up the ladder of stardom, and profit artistically from the tough lessons she's learned.

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1 THE HOLIDAY MTRCB PG-13 1.00, 4:00, 7.00, 10.00
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM MTRCB GP
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB MTRCB GP
APOCALYPTO MTRCB R-18
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER MTRCB R-13 2:10, 4:50, 7:25, 10:00
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2 THE HOLIDAY 2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10 PG 13
3 APOCALYPTO 2:20, 5:20 R 18
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 8:30, 11:00 G
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER 12:55, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30, 11:00 PG 13

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G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 NIGHT AT HE MUSEUM	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 TFX HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE HISTORY BOYS	5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	6 THE HOLIDAY	7 APOCALYPTO
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 APOCALYPTO		2 THE HOLIDAY	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 TFX THE MESSENGERS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 TFX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 THE HISTORY BOYS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 TFX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS		2 HANNIBAL RISING	
	3 THE MESSENGERS	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 APOCALYPTO	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE HOLIDAY		2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	
	3 THE CLEANER	4 HANNIBAL RISING	5 THE MESSENGERS	

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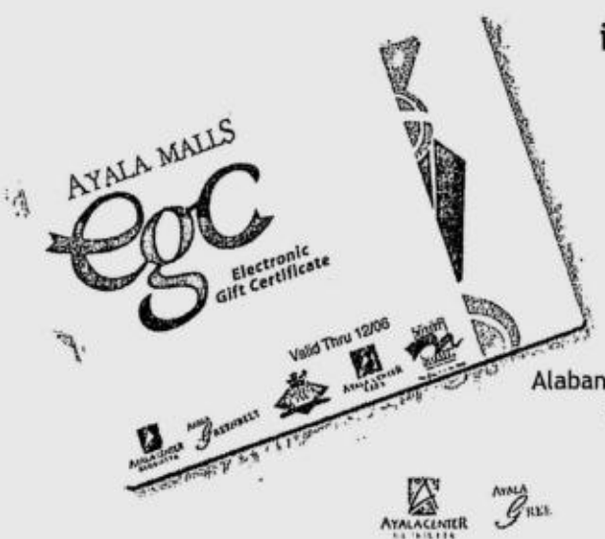

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"THE FAIRLY ODD PARENTS"

Nick shows

A TWO-HOUR long watch-athon of favorite Nick shows happens on Feb. 14.

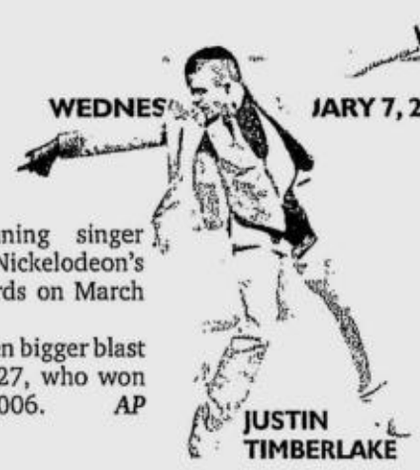
Celebrating the first blush and first crush are "My Life As A Teenage Robot" at 5:30 p.m., "Hey Arnold!" at 6 p.m., "As Told By Ginger" at 6:30 p.m. and "The Fairly Odd Parents" at 7 p.m.

KID FIT

Kids' choice

LOS ANGELES—Grammy-winning singer Justin Timberlake will host Nickelodeon's 20th annual Kids' Choice Awards on March 31.

"I'm revving up to have an even bigger blast than usual," said Timberlake, 27, who won the Awards in 1999, 2003 and 2006. *AP*



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LIFESTYLE / C1

Once more, with feeling: Guide to Valentine's Day dining

BUSINESS / B1

Peso climbs to new 6-year high to 48.365 to $1

WORLD / A19

US, Iraqi forces start crackdown vs Sunni, Shiite militias

NEWS / A2

Senate passes antiterror bill on 2nd reading

BUSINESS/ B6

Ilocos 'chichacorn' pops up in Australia, Cyprus, Saudi Arabia

US sent $4B to Iraq; cash weighed 363 tons

WASHINGTON—THE US FEDERAL RESERVE sent record payouts of more than $4 billion in cash to Baghdad on giant pallets aboard military planes shortly before the United States gave control back to Iraqis, lawmakers said on Tuesday.

The money, which had been held by the United States, came from Iraqi oil exports, surplus

US SENT/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Thursday, February 8, 2007 ★★ 4 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 62 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

Pagasa sees very hot election season

By Edson C. Tandoc Jr.

FILIPINOS NOT ONLY have to contend with hotly contested elections but also with a scorching campaign period.

Take it from the

PAGASA/ A4

Leviste arrested

He's now in jail on a murder charge

LEGARDA maintains commanding lead in the latest Pulse Asia survey. INQUIRER PHOTO

Loren, Ping, Kiko, Alan, Tito 'sure winners'

FORMER SEN. LOREN LEGARDA CONTINued to pull away from other senatorial aspirants with a rating of 46.6 percent, more than 10 percentage points ahead of her nearest possible rivals, according to results of the latest Pulse Asia survey.

In distant second were Senators Panfilo Lacson and Francis Pangilinan who were tied at 34.6 percent.

They were followed by Taguig-Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano (31.7 percent) and former Sen. Vicente Sotto III (28.8 percent). Cayetano is a brother of Sen. Pia Cayetano.

The non-commissioned survey, titled "Senatorial Voting Preferences," was conducted nationwide from Jan. 25 to 29, and used a multi-stage probability sample of 1,200 respondents aged 18 and above.

The survey has a margin of error of plus or minus 3 percentage points at the 95-percent confidence level.

In a statement, Pulse Asia said Legarda, Lacson, Pangilinan, Cayetano and Sotto might be considered sure winners if elections were held today because their statistical

LOREN/ A4

Outside looking in, inside looking out

By Norman Bordadora

AFTER SPENDING A GOOD PART of his life behind bars for the killing of American Col. James "Nick" Rowe in 1989, Donato Continente remains steadfast in an advocacy that may get him back in jail or, worse, kill him.

Released on June 28, 2005, Continente is an active member of an organization of former detainees, the Samahan ng Ex-Detainees Laban sa Detensyon at para Amnestiya (Selda), and continues to work for the release of political prisoners and against the violation of human rights.

"Nothing has changed. Perhaps it's just that the area I work in now is much wider. Before, I only did organizing work in the maximum security compound [of the New Bilibid Prison in Muntinlupa City]," Continente, 45, said yesterday in a phone interview.

Continente and Juanito Itaas were convicted in 1989 of killing Rowe, a Vietnam War hero and one of America's most highly decorated soldiers. Rowe was the highest ranking US officer killed in the Philippines since the communist insurgency began nearly 40 years ago.

Itaas and Continente were sentenced to life in prison.

OUTSIDE/ A13

DETAINEE NO. 517, CELL NO. 3: From the Makati police headquarters, former Governor Leviste was transferred to the Makati City Jail early last night. RYAN LIM

Politics of survival may split Wednesday Group

By TJ Burgonio

TWO MEMBERS OF THE SENATE'S Wednesday Group, Senators Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto, have been named to the senatorial slate of the administration's Team Unity. It would appear that Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. and the three other members of the group will go their separate ways in the race for the Senate.

The position of another member of the group, Majority Floor Leader Francis Pangilinan, was not known at press time.

Speaker Jose de Venecia disclosed yesterday the names of the administration's nine senatorial aspirants which included Arroyo and Recto. Though neither Arroyo nor Recto has declared running under the unity ticket.

Despite avowals that the members of the Wednesday Group would stick together, Villar was "inclined" to join the Estrada-led United Opposition (UNO), while Arroyo was keen on aligning with Team Unity, said a reelectionist senator, who asked not to be named.

De Venecia said the soon-to-be completed list of Team Unity also included reelectionist Sen. Edgardo Angara, for-

POLITICS/ A13

By Tarra Quismundo

THE FAMILY WAS JUST about done with lunch yesterday when told that the Makati Regional Trial Court wanted Antonio "Tony" Leviste arrested for murder.

Per his youngest daughter Toni's account, the former governor of Batangas was ready to surrender within minutes. Along with Toni and her sisters Charley and Joie and their mother Celia, he made his way down the Leviste-owned LPL building in Makati City.

At the same time, the Makati police chief, Supt. Gilbert Cruz, was on his way up to serve the arrest warrant.

Police took custody of Leviste, 67, at around 1:30 p.m. for the fatal shooting of his longtime friend and associate Rafael de las Alas on Jan. 12. Cruz told reporters later in a press briefing at the Makati police headquarters that Leviste went "peacefully" with authorities.

The court issued the arrest warrant half an hour earlier, after approving the upgrade of the charge against the ex-governor from homicide to murder, a nonbailable crime.

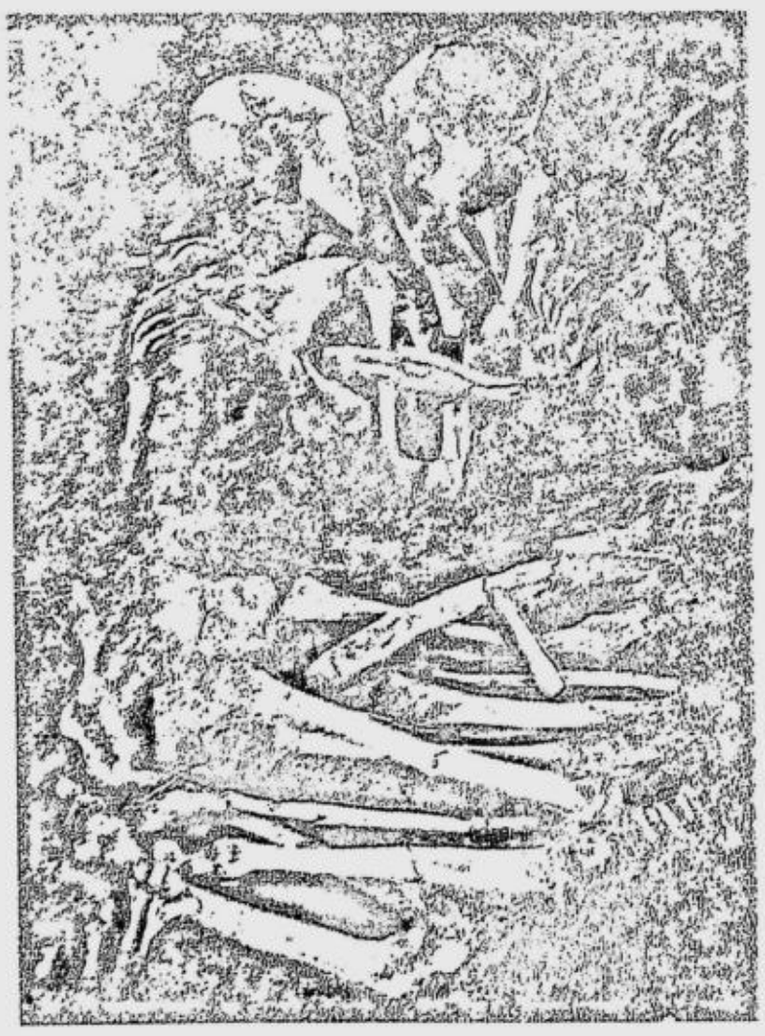
"The moment I learned that a warrant of arrest has been issued for me, I came immediately to submit myself to the authorities. As I said before, I have nothing to hide. I am innocent; my conscience is clear and I am anxious to clear my name," Leviste, uncuffed and wearing a light yellow shirt, said at the briefing.

"Meanwhile," he added, "I must condemn, in the strongest terms, the manner in which my constitutional rights were trampled upon. However, I still have faith in our judicial system and I am confident that in the end I will be vindicated."

Leviste is now at the Makati City Jail.

LEVISTE/ A7

'I've never been so moved ... this is something special'



"THE ETERNAL EMBRACE": Archaeological dig site in northern Italy yielded the skeletons of a couple buried 5,000 to 6,000 years ago. Archaeologists are calling the exciting find an extraordinary case. REUTERS

ROME—CALL IT THE ETERnal embrace.

Archaeologists in Italy have discovered a couple buried 5,000 to 6,000 years ago, hugging each other.

"It's an extraordinary case," said Elena Menotti, who led the team on their dig near the northern city of Mantova.

"There has not been a double burial found in the Neolithic period, much less two people hugging—and they really are hugging."

The Neolithic Age refers to the last phase of the Stone Age beginning in 8000 BC.

Menotti said she believed the two, almost certainly a man and a woman although that needs to be confirmed, died young because their teeth were mostly intact and not worn down.

"I must say that when we discovered it, we all became very excited. I've been doing this job for 25 years. I've done digs at Pompeii, all the famous sites," she told Reuters.

"But I've never been so moved because this is the discovery of something special."

A laboratory will now try to determine the couple's age at the time of death and how long they had been buried. *Reuters*

SPACED OUT: Astronaut Lisa Nowak (left) is charged with the attempted murder of her alleged romantic rival on Tuesday, Air Force Capt. Coleen Shipman (right) over the affections of fellow astronaut William A. Oefelein. REUTERS

'HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM'

Moonstruck astronaut charged with attempted murder of rival

ORLANDO, FLORIDA—LIKE MOST of today's astronauts, Lisa Marie Nowak worked in relative obscurity—even last July, when she took the space flight that she had spent 10 years at National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) hoping for.

She is famous now, the smiling image of her in astronaut gear a sharp contrast with her police mug shot—a woman with wild hair wearing an expression of personal devastation.

Captain Nowak, of Houston, is charged with the attempted murder of a rival for the affections of a fellow astronaut. Police officials say she drove 900 miles from Texas to Florida, wearing a diaper so that she would not have to stop for rest breaks. In Orlando, she confronted her rival in a parking lot, attacking her with pepper spray.

Nowak was in disguise at the time, wearing a wig. She had brought a steel mallet, a knife, pepper spray, 4 feet of rubber tubing, latex gloves and garbage bags with her, the police said.

Many inside and outside Nasa are wondering how the problems of Nowak, who served in the Navy before joining Nasa, were

MOONSTRUCK/ A8

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2007

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WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern, Central and Eastern Luzon, Bicol region and Northeastern Visayas will experience mostly cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Partly Cloudy	Iloilo/Bacolod	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Partly Cloudy	Gen. Santos	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Partly Cloudy	Zamboanga	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	Cagayan de Oro	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	Davao	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY KATE PEDROSO, INQUIRER RESEARCH/02/07/07 SOURCE PAGASA

Senate passes antiterror bill

By TJ Burgonio

SENATORS LAST NIGHT APproved their version of the administration's antiterror bill, removed of its contentious provisions, but activists said it could still be used to muzzle legitimate dissent.

Voting 16 to 2, the senators passed SB 2137, the antiterrorism bill that Malacañang has long sought to fight al-Qaida-linked terrorists.

Renamed the Human Security Act of 2007 to make it "sound more positive," according to Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr., the bill has long been on the backburner because of the clamor from various lawmakers to water it down to prevent abuse by law enforcers.

"The safeguards that we have put in place, we hope, will ease the fears of human rights advocates and the general public as well," said Senate President Manuel Villar Jr., the bill's principal author, while saying that he hoped it would "stop the terrorists in their tracks."

The Senate version will be merged with that of the House, that was approved last year, through a bicameral conference committee to be convened today.

But militant legislators Satur C. Ocampo and Crispin Beltran expressed apprehension that many of the provisions removed by the senators could be restored in the bicameral conference committee.

"The safeguards to civil liberties and human rights and other guarantees against abuse during elections may all be removed in the bicameral committee on orders of Malacañang and due to immoral pressure from the United States," said Ocampo.

Major amendments that the senators made to the original bill introduced by Malacañang include the reduction to three days from 15 days the period of detention without charges for a terror suspect; and an increase in compensation from P50,000 to P500,000 for each day a person is wrongfully detained.

"Our amendments have effectively defanged the original version," said Pimentel who with Sen. Franklin Drilon voted "yes" with reservations and conditions. Senators Manuel Roxas II and Jamby Madrigal voted against.

Explaining his "no" vote, Roxas said the "tools" against terrorism, including computers, appropriate training of people and forensics equipment, were not in place.

He said he did not believe that the weakest link in the battle against terrorism lay with "our not having an appropriate law to combat terrorism."

Madrigal said the measure was "draconian" which would lead to the "trampling of our fundamental rights."

The Senate version of the bill defines terrorism as an act punishable under the Revised Penal Code and under other laws "with the condition of sowing and creating a condition of widespread and extraordinary fear and panic among the populace to coerce the government to yield to an unlawful demand."

Police had sought a month of detention without charges for suspected terrorists. They also sought the death penalty for convicted terrorists but capital punishment was abolished in the country last June.

The maximum punishment under the Senate version is 40 years imprisonment without parole.

Journalists, lawyers and doctors cannot be compelled to disclose details about militants under the bill.

The legislation also cannot be enforced a month before or two months after any elections to prevent incumbents from using it to harass political rivals. *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Mike A happy, but Cayetano may dodge penalty

By Michael Lim Ubac

THE PRESIDENT'S HUSBAND, JOSE MIGUEL Arroyo, praised the House committee on ethics and privileges which slapped a 45-day suspension on House Deputy Minority Leader Alan Peter Cayetano for failing to prove his accusation that the First Family maintained millions of dollars in a German Bank.

But the suspension, which still needs affirmation by two-thirds of the House or 155 votes, may not be served for lack of time.

Congress will meet for possibly its last plenary session today before it gives way to the election period, with the antiterror bill on top of its agenda.

But even if Cayetano is saved by the bell, the President's husband said he could "take comfort that (he and his family) have been proven innocent."

"The overwhelming condemnation of his peers, who called for his suspension, is our vindication after the vicious, malicious and unfounded smear campaign that he waged against my family and myself," said Arroyo in a statement.

The President's husband, armed with a certification from the HypoVereins Bank in Munich that no one in the Arroyo family had an account with the bank, withstood a tumultuous, six-hour committee hearing the other day. Cayetano did not present evidence to back his claims but asked to be allowed to subpoena documents and witnesses in his defense. The committee thumbed down his plea and instead called for a vote on the issue.

Despite the lesser penalty given Cayetano (suspension, rather than expulsion), Mr. Arroyo said they "accept the judgment" on the young lawmaker whose accusations "were revealed to be nothing but scurrilous and brazen lies."

He congratulated the 35 committee members who "stood up for truth and justice."

Cayetano, however, remained unrepentant. "How could he feel vindicated when people expected his allies in the house to vote that way?"

The lawmaker, who is seeking a Senate seat in May, said his suspension—if at all served—was only "symbolic" because the only thing he would lose was his takehome pay of about P45,000. "The projects for the lone district of Taguig-Pateros "had been suspended a long time ahead of me."

In Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduaro Ermita said he expected the suspension, whether or not carried out by the House in plenary session, would finally put to a close the issue of the First Family's German bank accounts.

"I wish there would be closure but it's a political season, we do not know the intent of others. We should put it to rest and consider more substantial issues facing our people during the elections."

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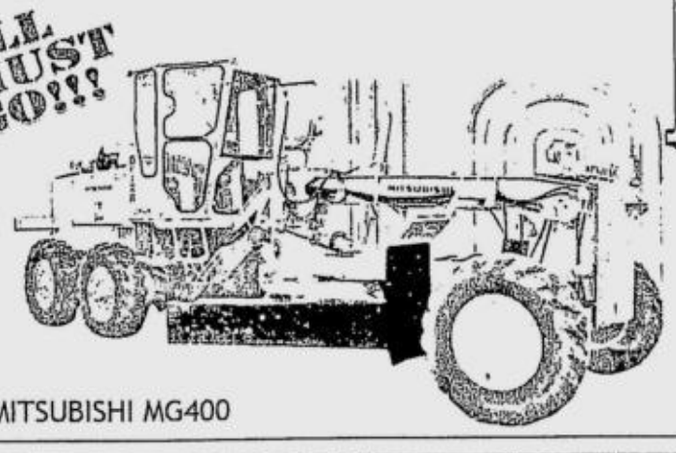
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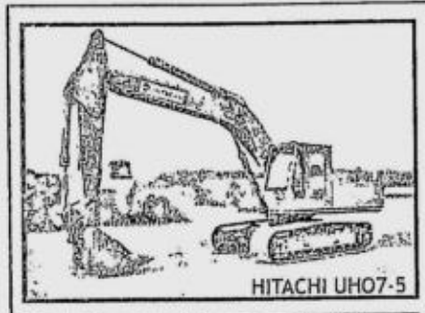
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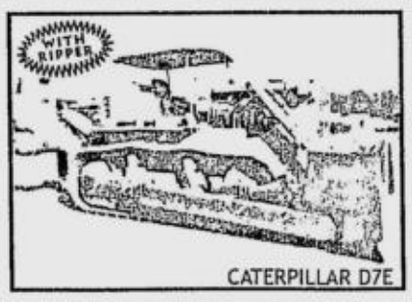
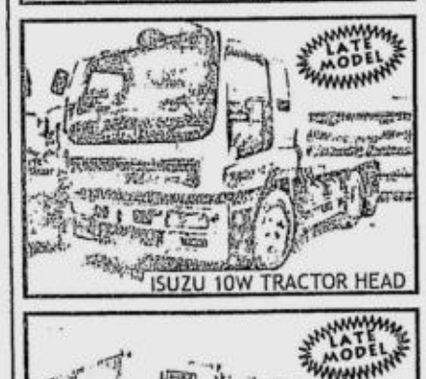

CATERPILLAR D7E

INGERSOLL-RAND SP54 VIBRATORY ROLLER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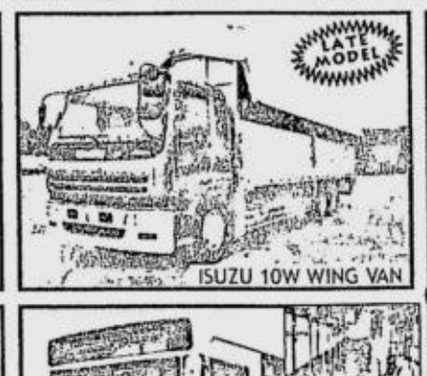
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Oil left in sunken tanker to be sucked

FUEL FROM THE hold of a tanker that sunk in deep waters off Guimaras Island last year is to be siphoned off next month, seven months after the country's worst oil spill, the government said yesterday.

The operation to recover the cargo of the Solar I, which lies on the seabed off the coast of Guimaras, should begin on March 8 and last for about a month, said Glenn Rabonza, administrator of the civil defense office.

The 998-ton tanker sank with half a million gallons of industrial fuel on August 11 last year, rupturing some of the tanks that leaked tens of thousands of gallons of oil and destroyed a marine reserve, ruined local fishing grounds and covered stretches of coastline with black sludge.

Two crew members are still missing, presumed dead, from the accident which a maritime inquiry blamed on overloading and inadequate training of the ship's captain.

"We are working towards the siphoning of the remaining oil from the sunken Solar I," Rabonza told reporters. *AFP*

NEWSBRIEFS

Chavit recovering, girds for campaign

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

ILOCOS SUR GOV. LUIS "CHAVit" Singson plans to go straight to the Commission on Elections office and file his senatorial candidacy papers as soon as he is released from hospital, according to a statement released by the governor's office yesterday.

"The governor is recovering fast as expected and ready to answer all other queries regarding his surgery within the next few days," the statement said.

Reports that Singson had undergone a surgery for an abdominal aneurysm at the Asian Hospital on Tuesday threw administration political operatives organizing the "Team Unity" senatorial slate into a tizzy yesterday.

A source from Team Unity's recruitment team, who requested anonymity, said that they had no idea about the state of Singson's health and how it would affect his plans to run for the Senate.

Singson, who has been strongly endorsed by the country's governors to represent local government interests in the Senate, was a shoo-in for Team Unity, the source said.

SINGSON

A Singson insider said the governor, who he said was resting at his hospital suite yesterday with close family members, remained keen on running.

He said Singson wanted to be in the peak of health when he hits the road for the senatorial campaign.

No shortage of ballot boxes

By Jerome Aning

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS yesterday assured the public that there will be no shortage of ballot boxes for the May polls.

Comelec Chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said the poll body was addressing the shortage and that bidding for about 100,000 ballot boxes, along with other election paraphernalia, would soon be conducted, with the pre-bid conference set for Feb. 28.

The Comelec's bidding and awards committee has plans to buy about 75,000 ballot boxes, at a cost of between P1,000 and P2,000 each.

It is still trying to determine if the remaining 25,000 can be replaced by recycled ballot boxes, that is, by old or damaged ones that can be repaired and repainted.

Election lawyer Romulo Macalintal earlier expressed concern that there could be a shortage of ballot boxes, noting that about 100,000 boxes involved in the election protest of defeated vice presidential candidate Loren Legarda cannot be touched.

The boxes, containing the questioned ballots and returns, are under the custody of the Supreme Court, which also sits as the Presidential Electoral Tribunal.

Drug tests for candidates

COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. yesterday told all candidates running for public office on May 14 to undergo drug testing and submit certifications that they underwent and passed such test. Those who fail to undergo drug testing will be targeted by the "shame campaign" of the Comelec through public notices indicating who did or did not submit to drug tests. Section 36 of RA 9165 or the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002 requires all candidates for elective positions, whether national or local, to undergo drug testing. Abalos, however, said Comelec was helpless in requiring candidates for the Senate and the House of Representatives to submit such certifications because the Constitution did not include passing a drug test as a qualification for national legislators. For local candidates from governor down to barangay officials, it is the Department of Interior and Local Government that enforces the provision on drug-testing and the agency could legally prevent any winner candidate from assuming office if he or she failed to undergo drug-testing, according to Abalos. *Jerome Aning*

Dirty money to be monitored

THE COMMISSION ON ELECtions has deputized the Anti-Money Laundering Council to monitor campaign funds obtained through illegal means. "I ask candidates to be very, very careful in making sure that their campaign funds came from legal sources and that their expenditures are well within the bounds allowed by law," Comelec chair Benjamin Abalos Sr. said in a press conference yesterday. A resolution on the matter has been approved by the Comelec and its final draft would soon be published, he added. Target of Amlac would be campaign money from gambling and illegal drugs. Amlac, however, could only monitor how campaign funds were used and sourced. Section 16 of Republic Act No. 9160 or the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2001 states that no case for money laundering may be filed against and no assets shall be frozen, attached or forfeited to the prejudice of a candidate for an electoral office during an election period. *Jerome Aning*

One quick-count body

THE COMMISSION ON ELECtions yesterday urged three poll watchdogs to consolidate their operations so they could be granted a single authorization to conduct a quick count during the May elections. "There's only a limited number of election returns, only one is allotted for a quick-count accredited agency," Abalos said. The National Movement for Free Elections, Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voters and the National Secretariat for Social Action, the implementing arm of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines' Episcopal Commission on Social Justice and Peace, are all seeking accreditation to conduct a quick count. Abalos called a conference of the three groups on Feb. 9 to discuss how they can consolidate their request. *Jerome Aning*

Hostage general's promotion OKd

By TJ Burgonio

AFTER A LONG WAIT, MAJ. GEN. BENjamin Dolorfino yesterday finally got confirmation on his promotion, but not after being grilled by lawmakers about the recent hostage crisis in Sulu where the general and members of a peace mission were prevented from leaving a camp of the Moro National Liberation Front.

The Commission on Appointments, chaired by Senate President Manuel Villar Jr., approved in plenary the ad-interim appointment of Dolorfino, the promotion of 39 other military officials; the appointment of Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap, and the appointment of 14 officers of the Department of Foreign Affairs.

Dolorfino, 52, head of the military's National Capital Regional Command, appeared relieved by his confirmation, which came after an intense grilling by CA members.

The general, a graduate of the Philippine Military Academy (Class '76), said his promotion and designation as superintendent of the PMA were deferred after he was requested to stay on as part of the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process.

The committee on defense on Monday recommended approval of the general's appointment to the plenary.

Speaking at the CA plenary, Sen. Richard Gordon demanded a Senate inquiry into the hostage-taking incident.

Dolorfino admitted on Tuesday they were held hostage, but advised the government against taking retaliatory action against the MNLF to avoid jeopardizing the tactical cooperation between the military and the group against Abu Sayyaf and the Jemaah Islamiyah.

Dolorfino and other members of the peace mission were freed Sunday afternoon following negotiations by the government peace negotiators and the Organization of Islamic Conference.

In Malacañang, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita said the government will ask the OIC to look into the hostage taking and to caution the MNLF from repeating the same incident.

"All these things will be brought to the attention of the OIC," Ermita told reporters.

Ermita said the government was not inclined to retaliate against the MNLF because "they are being supported by the OIC in the manner that they are Muslims."

The government has been urged to file charges of illegal detention and disarm MNLF commander Ustadz Habier Malik who prevented Dolorfino and other members of the peace mission from leaving an MNLF camp for more than two days.

As this developed, Malik yesterday reiterated his call for the removal of Secretary Jesus Dureza as the government's chief peace negotiator.

Malik, spiritual adviser of the MNLF in Sulu, said Dureza has no capability to handle the government's peace efforts with the Bangsamoro people. "He is not reliable," he said.

But Ermita said the government has no plans to replace Dureza.

Malik was angered by Dureza's statements that the MNLF in Panamao indeed took the government peace mission hostage and that the MNLF should be disarmed.

With reports from Gil Cabacungan and Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao

CONFIRMED by the Commission on Appointments are Brig. Gen. Eduardo Oban and Maj. Gen Benjamin Dolorfino (right photo) JESS YUSON

SC cuts Jalosjos pimp's sentence

THE SUPREME COURT HAS UPHELD the child abuse conviction but reduced the sentence of the adoptive father of the young rape victim of former Rep. Romeo Jalosjos.

Simplicio Delantar was convicted in 1999 for two counts of child abuse for selling his ward for sex to clients, including Jalosjos. He was meted the maximum penalty of reclusion perpetua or life imprisonment.

In the case involving the victim "AAA," Jalosjos, the then congressman of Zamboanga del Norte, was convicted of statutory rape and is serving a double life sentence.

In reducing the life sentence of Delantar, the high court said it was not proven that he was the victim's biological father or legal guardian, which would have been a mitigating circumstance for the imposition of the maximum penalty.

"At best, appellant is AAA's de facto guardian. Now, would this circumstance justify the imposition of the higher penalty on him? We think not," the Court said in its Feb. 2 decision.

It instead sentenced Delantar to a minimum of 14 years, 8 months and 1 day to a maximum of 17 years, 4 months and 1 day.

The tribunal also ordered Delantar to pay the victim P50,000 in moral damages and P20,000 to be administered as a cash fund by the Department of Social Welfare and Development, revising the Court of Appeals' earlier decision to award the victim P50,000 in civil indemnity, P50,000 in moral damages and P25,000 in exemplary damages.

The high court said that had it been proven that Delantar was the victim's father or guardian, the maximum penalty of reclusion perpetua, or 30 years in prison, would have been imposed on him.

But the Court said the victim's birth certificate, while listing Delantar as the father, did not bear the latter's signature and could thus not be accepted as evidence that he was indeed the father. *Leila B. Salaverria*

Cops, soldiers gun ban exempt

THE COMMISSION ON ELECTIONS HAS EXempted from the election gun ban all soldiers, policemen and other law enforcers who carry firearms while in their uniforms as well as those in civilian clothes on their way to and from their offices and residences.

"This will lessen the load of our gun ban committee," Abalos told reporters in a press conference.

Abalos said the committee, headed by Commissioner Nicodemo Ferrer has been deluged by applications for exemptions filed by soldiers and policemen who live and work in different places.

"If they're in uniform or even if they were in civilian clothes but are going directly to their offices or houses, they should no longer be accosted for gun ban violations," he said.

Abalos said the Commission also gave automatic exemptions to the members of the Presidential Security Group and the the security detail of Senate President Manuel Villar, Speaker Jose de Venecia, and members of the Supreme Court, other superior courts and other constitutional commissions. *Jerome Aning*

23M Filipinos have no toilets, clean water

By Margaux C. Ortiz

BANGKOK—CLOSE TO A BILLION people in East Asia and the Pacific—among them 23 million Filipinos—have no access to basic sanitation like toilets and clean water.

This problem, a common cause of disease, was highlighted in a workshop involving media and government representatives from the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos held here yesterday.

According to Brian Steven Smith, acting regional team leader of the Water and Sanitation Program (WSP)-East Asia and the Pacific, China tops the list of countries where a significant number of the population has yet to experience sitting on toilet bowls or drinking potable water from their faucets.

Smith said that 700 million Chinese have basic sanitation problems.

The Philippines ranked fourth on the list, following Indonesia and Vietnam.

"Asia is a fast-growing region but not in water and sanitation," Smith said in his presentation during the workshop.

Lack of political will, coordination

The WSP official said the lack of political will and coordination among the different agencies has resulted in this pressing problem.

Noel Hechanova, Iloilo City Environment and Natural Resources Officer, stressed that unavailability of basic sanitation has led to the uncontrolled spread of water-related diseases in the Philippines.

About 31 percent of illnesses among Filipinos are water-related, such as diarrhea and *E. coli*.

"Twenty-five out of the 93 Filipinos die from diarrhea each day," the Filipino official said.

Hechanova added that he and the other members of Local Initiative for Affordable Waste Water Treatment (Linaw) have tried to identify the specific issues surrounding the local problem pertaining to water and sanitation.

"We found out that the groundwater supply in Linaw's four pilot cities including Iloilo, Dumaguete, Muntinlupa and Naga could be contaminated within 5 to 10 years if not contained immediately," the Filipino official said.

Contamination of aquifers

He likewise noted that failing to build proper septic tanks and letting these structures overflow have led to the dangerous contamination of aquifers or small pockets of reservoir or underground streams used for drinking.

Indonesian representative Nugruho Tri Utomo, on the other hand, said that their government has been losing 42.3 trillion rupiah or $4.7 million annually because of water and sanitation problems.

Basic sanitation

Nugruho said that tons of human wastes are discharged into Indonesian rivers and creeks because of the alarming lack of facilities for sanitation.

Dr. Chea Semnang of Cambodia also stressed the prevalence of similar problems in their country, with seven million people living in the countryside who do not have adequate safe water supply.

"Around 11 million Cambodians do not realize the risks that the lack of basic sanitation pose to their health," Semnang said.

Small plane ditches; 6 unscathed

A LIGHT PASSENGER aircraft ditched off the waters of Marigondon Beach on Mactan Island after its two engines conked out yesterday morning, the Air Transportation Office (ATO) reported.

Six people onboard the turboprop BN Islander were shaken but unhurt.

The ATO identified the pilot and co-pilot as Capt. Procopio Dahan and Capt. Leo Dahan, respectively. The plane's passengers were listed as Capt. Prescillo Paz, Capt. Giovanni Paz, Nita Paz and Bernard Bersano.

The Manila-bound small plane had come from Davao City and was landing at the Mactan Cebu International Airport (MCIA) for refueling when it developed engine trouble.

The pilot managed to ditch the plane near the Plantation Bay Island Resort on Mactan Island, about a kilometer from the shoreline. The people aboard were helped by local authorities out of the aircraft, which was half submerged in knee-deep waters, ATO official Manuel Villegas said.

The accident is under investigation. *With reports from Nikko Dizon and AP*

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Pagasa to dun airlines

GOVERNMENT WEATHER FORECASTERS plan to charge commercial carriers for weather information that helps airlines fly safely through Philippine skies.

Shipping companies already pay the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration for such information, Pagasa officials told reporters yesterday.

Payment for the "flight folder" data would help defray the cost of installing P1 billion ($20.7 million) worth of advanced radar systems to upgrade the country's disaster preparedness, they said.

"We would start charging fees from domestic flights and eventually charges would also be imposed on international flights, once our weather system facilities match (international standards)," said Pagasa weather specialist Edna Juanillo.

Weather service chief Nathaniel Cruz said the Philippines planned to install 10 Doppler radars across the country by 2010, with three set, to be installed shortly. *AFP*

Pagasa sees very hot . . .

From page A1

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

In the next few days, the temperature will be rising to return to normal conditions, ending the cold days people in the capital and other areas have been enjoying or enduring.

"We are predicting these cold days would end this week or next week and we will return to normal conditions," Pagasa climate monitoring and prediction center chief Edna Juanillo said in a media forum in San Juan yesterday.

The campaign period for the May balloting begins next week.

Juanillo said Pagasa was predicting no storms would enter the country during the first quarter.

Summer usually begins in March, but she said intense heat would be felt between April and May.

Normally, rains start to fall in May but she said the onset of the rainy season would be delayed this year because of the El Niño phenomenon.

The phenomenon appears to be ending its cycle, but if it continues, Juanillo said Filipinos could also expect fewer storms and typhoons this year.

This could still change however and strong typhoons could still rock the country before the year ends, she added.

LACSON

PANGILINAN

CAYETANO

SOTTO

Loren, Ping, Kiko, Alan, Tito 'sure winners'

From page A1

rankings ranged from 1st to 11th places—clearly within the winning circle.

Opposition bets winning

Of the 14 people listed as having a "statistical chance of winning a senatorial seat" in the pre-election survey, seven are officially part of the United Opposition's senatorial slate.

Six may or may not run under the administration's ticket, and one will run as an independent opposition candidate.

Sharing the same statistical ranking of 5th to 14th places in the survey were six people. They were Senate President Manuel Villar Jr. (26.4 percent); Sen. Ralph Recto (26.0 percent); Sen. Joker Arroyo (25.8 percent); San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito-Estrada (25.7 percent); Aquilino Pimentel III (24.4 percent), and Sen. Edgardo Angara (24.0 percent).

Pimentel III is a son of Sen. Aquilino Pimentel Jr. while Ejercito-Estrada is a son of deposed President Joseph Estrada.

Still on the list of probable winners were former Sen. Gregorio Honasan (23.3 percent), House Minority Leader Francis Escudero (23.2 percent), and Tarlac Rep. Benigno Aquino III (22.5 percent).

Average of eight names

On average, Filipinos are naming eight out of a maximum of 12 of their senatorial bets for the May 14 elections, Pulse Asia said.

This was also the same figure recorded in Pulse Asia's November 2006 Ulat ng Bayan national survey.

Compared with the results of the November survey, Legarda, Lacson and Pangilinan maintained their rankings.

Villar went down from between 3rd and 8th to between 5th and 14th, as Cayetano went up from between 4th and 8th in November to between 2nd and 5th in January. *(See table.)*

Moving up

Also moving up on the list were Arroyo (from between 12th and 25th to between 5th and 14th), and Angara (from between 9th and 19th to between 5th and 14th).

Ejercito-Estrada (from between 8th and 16th to between 5th and 14th), and Aquino III (from between 11th and 22nd to between 6th and 15th,) and Escudero (from between 11th and 22nd to between 6th and 14th).

Moving down

Dropping out of the list were Ilocos Norte Rep. Imee Marcos, Sen. Luisa "Loi" Estrada and television personality Korina Sanchez, all of whom had been listed as "also having a statistical chance of winning" in the November survey.

From being among the possible top 12 in the November survey with a statistical ranking of between 11th and 24th, former Sen. John Henry Osmeña dropped to between 14th and 20th, while Muntinlupa Rep. Rozzano Rufino "Ruffy" Biazon slid down to between 15th and 29th.

Detained Navy Lt. Antonio Trillanes, who is facing coup d'etat charges for his role in the failed July 2003 Oakwood mutiny, filed his certificate of candidacy on Tuesday.

He was ranked between 38th and 57th in the survey. *Reports from Cynthia D. Balana and Kate Pedroso, Inquirer Research*

SENATORIAL VOTING PREFERENCES

Pulse Asia Survey:
Jan. 25-29, 2007 and Oct. 21 to Nov. 8, 2006

Names	Rank	
	Jan07	Nov06
LEGARDA, Loren	1	1
LACSON, Panfilo "Ping" M.	2-4	2-3
PANGILINAN, Francis "Kiko" N.	2-4	2-4
CAYETANO, Alan Peter S.	2-5	4-8
SOTTO, Vicente "Tito" C. III	4-11	4-8
VILLAR, Manuel "Manny" B. Jr.	5-14	3-8
RECTO, Ralph G.	5-14	4-10
ARROYO, Joker P.	5-14	12-25
EJERCITO-ESTRADA, JV	5-14	8-16
PIMENTEL, Aquilino "Koko"	5-14	7-12
ANGARA, Edgardo "Ed" J.	5-14	9-19
HONASAN, Gregorio "Gringo" B.	6-14	7-12
ESCUDERO, Francis "Chiz" G.	6-14	11-22
AQUINO, Benigno "Noynoy" C. III	6-15	11-22

SENATORIAL VOTING PREFERENCES

Pulse Asia Survey: Jan. 25-29, 2007

	Aware	Voting For	Rank
LEGARDA, Loren	96	46.6	1
LACSON, Panfilo Ping M	94	34.6	2-4
PANGILINAN, Francis Kiko	90	34.6	2-4
CAYETANO, Alan Peter S.	80	31.7	2-5
SOTTO, Vicente Tito C. III	92	28.8	4-11
VILLAR, Manuel Manny Jr.	92	26.4	5-14
RECTO, Ralph G.	89	26.0	5-14
ARROYO, Joker P.	89	25.8	5-14
EJERCITO-ESTRADA, JV	93	25.7	5-14
PIMENTEL, Aquilino "Koko"	86	24.4	5-14
ANGARA, Edgardo "Ed" J.	92	24.0	5-14
HONASAN, Gregorio Gringo	92	23.3	6-14
ESCUDERO, Francis Chiz G.	79	23.2	6-14
AQUINO, Benigno Noynoy	87	22.5	6-15
OSMEÑA, John Henry	81	17.9	14-20
BARBERS, Robert Ace S.	83	17.1	15-20
ROCES, Susan	91	16.9	15-20
TATAD, Francisco Kit S.	79	16.3	15-22
DEFENSOR, Michael Mike T.	80	14.3	15-26
BIAZON, Rozzano Rufino	66	13.9	15-29
MONTANO, Cesar	91	12.8	18-31
MANZANO, Edu	91	12.4	18-32
AQUINO-ORETA, Teresa	78	11.5	19-35
DE VENECIA, Gina	78	11.5	19-35
MERCADO, Orlando Orly S.	79	11.3	19-35
REMULLA, Gilbert C.	54	10.9	19-36
RAMOS, Fidel V.	93	10.5	20-37
ATIENZA, Jose "Lito" L. Jr	72	10.3	20-37
ZUBIRI, Juan Miguel "Migs"	66	10.3	20-37
MAGSAYSAY, Eulogio	49	10.1	21-37
ALVAREZ, Heherson	67	9.9	21-37
GOMEZ, Richard "Goma"	90	9.2	22-37
MONSOD, Solita C.	69	8.8	23-39
FERNANDO, Bayani "BF" F.	70	8.5	23-40
HERRERA, Ernesto Boy F.	71	8.2	23-41

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FOODBIZ EXPO ACTIVITIES — FREE ENTRANCE TO EXPO

FEBRUARY 8, 2007 (1st Day)
10am Your Road Map To A Successful Business (Free) - Room A
12nn Role Of DTI In SME Development (Free) - Room A
12nn Food Safety & Hygiene Awareness By Mantek (Free) - Room B
12nn Learn To Make Bitso-Bitso (Plain & W/ Fruit Fillings) & Fritters - Stage
1pm Running A Meat Shop Business In Your Home (P500) - Room A
2pm How To Start Your Business w/ P5,000 Capital (P500) Room B
5pm Starting a Business w/ Zero Capital by John Tan of Chef's Pride

FEBRUARY 9, 2007 (2nd Day)
10am The 7pt. Formula For Successful Foodcart Start-Up & Operations by Mark So, CEO, Businessmaker Academy (whole day, P2,500) - Rm A
10am Chocolate Making & Molding (P600) - Room B
10am Learn How To Decorate Cakes & Make Profit From It by Tess & Betsy Dilla of Sweet Home Bakeshop (Free) - Food Biz Stage
12nn Learn How To Make Pizza Dough & Variety of Toppings & Pasta Recipes (Free) - Food Biz Stage
2pm Baking Science & Putting Up Your Own Business by Emalyn Bernardo of San Miguel Flour Mills - (Free) Room B
3pm Baking Made Easy by Emalyn Bernardo of San Miguel Flour Mills - B
1pm How To Start Your Business by Philippine Franchise Association (PFA) (With Fee) Tel : 6383149 - Room C
5pm Learn The Business of Donut Making by Rod Gaddi of Pilmico Mauri
6pm How To Start An Electronic E-Loading Biz By E-Negosyo (Free) - Rm A

FEBRUARY 10, 2007 (3rd Day)
10am How To Start & Operate A Catering Business (P500) - Room A
10am Going Into The Dairy Business (P400) - Room B
11am Cooking Demo by Mega Sardines (Free) - Expo Stage
12nn Learn The Varieties of Rice Toppings & Barbeque Grills (Free) - Stage
1pm How To Franchise Your Business By PFA (With Fee) Tel : 6383149 - C
2pm Make Your Products Stand Out From The Shelves (The Right Packaging & Labeling For Your Food Products) (P500) - Room A
2pm Perfection: World's Hospitality Choice by Universal Weavers Corp. - B
3pm Wine Appreciation: With Application Of Wine To Food, Beverage Costing, Packaging For Gifts (P500) - Room B
4pm Learn How To Make Hopia Dimsum & Barbeque Grills (Free) - Stage
5pm Business That Fits Your Budget By JC Fran Corporation (Free) - Rm A

JR. CHEFS CONGRESS ACTIVITIES

FEBRUARY 8, 2007 (Thursday)
11am Popular Cafe Menus By JM Martinez- Owner, Green Tomato
12pm Childrens Party Specialty Menu By Chef Mike Crisologo, Executive Chef Of Enchanted Kingdom
12nn COMPETITION : CATERING OLYMPICS
2pm FORMAL OPENING
3pm How To Operate And Manage Your Catering Business
3pm COMPETITION : 12 EGGS

FEBRUARY 9, 2007 (Friday)
10am COMPETITION : KITCHEN DASH
12nn Techniques In Food Styling And Food Photography By Ms. Gina Navarro, Owner, Esterl's Caramel Cakes, Food Stylist Of Food Magazine, Abs-Cbn Publishing And Mark Floro Of Mark Floro's Photography
3pm COMPETITION : SALAD DRESSING FLAIRTENDING

FEBRUARY 10, 2007 (Saturday)
10am Banquet Event Order In The Perspective Of Banquet Operations
11am COMPETITION : CULINARY TALENT FAIR : THE SEARCH FOR FUTURE CELEBRITY CHEFS
1pm Western Cooking by Chef Gerd Menge (German) and Asian Cooking by Chef Manoj de Silva (Sri Lankan) both of ISCAHM
2pm COMPETITION : GO CART : MARKET BASKET COMPETITION
4pm Home Based Business Designed For Students
5pm AWARDING CEREMONIES

OTHER COMPETITIONS (DISPLAY CATEGORIES) :
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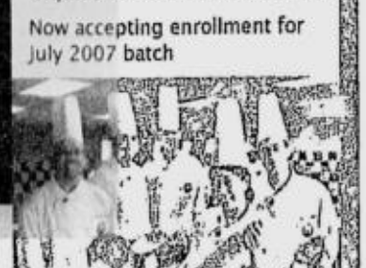

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Corrections

IN THE JAN. 31 issue, a Page A22 story—"Crocs are no crooks, say reptile lovers"—misspelled the name of the university that pioneered crocodile farming in the country. The institution is Silliman—not Siliman—University.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 2 issue, a front-page story—"Bombing in Metro foiled"—erroneously stated the date Abu Sayyaf spokesperson Abu Sulaiman was killed. Sulaiman was killed on Jan. 16, 2007—not "earlier this month" or February, as the article implied.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 3 issue, a Page A7 story—"Khalifa body flown to Saudi Arabia"—misspelled the name of the slain Abu Sayyaf leader who admitted in an interview that his group had received funds from men close to Osama bin Laden. The slain leader was Khadaffy—not Khaddafy—Janjalani.

* * *

IN THE FEB. 4 issue, a front-page story—"Belgian clowns show laughter has no borders"—misspelled the name of one of the Belgian clowns who are part of the Clowns et Magicians sans Frontieres (CMSF). The clown's name is Gauthier—not Gaultier—Jansen. In the same story, a photo caption misspelled and interchanged the names of CMSF clowns. The Belgian clowns in the photo are Celine Riesen—not Risen Celine—and Gauthier Jansen—not Jansen Gauthier.

* * *

IN THE SAME issue, a Page A4 photo caption misspelled the surname of the Makati candidate raising the hand of Sen. Lito Lapid during the senator's declaration of his running for mayor. The candidate raising the hand of the senator is Anthony Genuino—not Geniuno.

* * *

Readers may send their requests for correction of factual errors in writing to the Day Desk, Philippine Daily Inquirer, PDI Building, Chino Roces Avenue corner Mascardo Street, Makati City, fax Nos. 897-47-93/94; e-mail address: daydesk@inquirer.com.ph.

Complaints about lack of fairness or objectivity may be sent to Lorna Kalaw Tirol, readers' advocate, e-mail address: readersadvocate@inquirer.com. ph or fax Nos. 897-47-93/94, Attn: Readers Advocate. Her phone number is 897-8808 Local 342.

Appeals court upholds deportation of basketball exec

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE COURT OF APPEALS AFFIRMED THE deportation order on Basketball Association of the Philippines secretary general Graham Lim.

The court agreed that Lim was a Taiwanese national who had misrepresented himself as a Filipino and should be expelled from the country.

The Bureau of Immigration earlier ordered Lim's deportation to Taiwan for using a fraudulently acquired Philippine passport and claiming to be a Filipino in violation of immigration laws. Lim had appealed the decision before the Office of the President, which denied his plea.

Lim was arrested in March 2006 in preparation for his deportation but was subsequently released after the appeals court issued an injunction against his expulsion.

He has maintained that he is a Filipino, saying he was born and raised here.

"In sum, it has been substantially proven that the petitioner is an alien who misrepresented himself as a Filipino citizen. He is therefore considered as an undesirable alien and must be deported," the court's 10th division said in its Feb. 1 decision.

It upheld the resolution of the Office of the President ordering his deportation to Taiwan and lifted the injunction against his deportation.

The court said there was "overwhelming" evidence on record that Lim is not a Filipino. His claim that there should be prior judicial determination that he is a foreigner before the immigration bureau proceeds with his deportation case was "pointless," it added.

The bureau earlier presented as evidence against Lim his two petitions for naturalization as a Filipino before a Manila regional trial court and the Office of the Solicitor General, his Taiwanese passport, his alien certificate of registration and his birth and marriage certificates.

In his defense, Lim said he was a Filipino because his ancestors were Filipinos based on the Treaty of Paris, which declared all inhabitants of the country as Filipinos.

But the Office of the President said Lim failed to prove his ancestors were Philippine residents when the treaty was signed.

It also said that even if he was born and raised here, that does not automatically make him a Filipino since his parents were Taiwanese. It added that the Philippines operates under the doctrine of *jus sanguinis*, wherein the person follows the citizenship of his parents.

GRAHAM LIM

Globe subsidiary shortlisted for Bill and Melinda Gates CGAP Technology Program

G-Xchange, Inc. (GXI) and the Rural Bankers Association of the Philippines - Microenterprise Access to Banking Services (RBAP-MABS) Program have been shortlisted under the Technology Program of the Consultative Group to Assist the Poor (CGAP) to further their development of m-commerce services utilizing GCash to support access to financial services for rural communities.

With the support of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, CGAP's Technology Program is identifying, shaping, and nurturing projects which test new approaches to financial service delivery across a wide variety of settings. The program works with microfinance practitioners, banks, telecommunications and technology firms, and others.

Sylvia Matthews, President of the Global Development Program at the Gates Foundation, has said that, "...supporting pilots with new technologies that have the power to dramatically change the business model of delivering financial services, we can help expand access to financial services for hundreds of millions of poor people."

GCash is an internationally award-winning service that was pioneered by GXI, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Globe Telecom, enabling mobile subscribers to send and receive remittances, purchase goods and services, as well as pay micro-loans using a mobile phone. Last year, GXI partnered with RBAP and their USAID-supported MABS program to develop new m-commerce solutions utilizing GCash to expand services to rural bank clients across the country.

CGAP cited GXI and RBAP-MABS for their plan to extend the convenience of m-commerce services through GCash to low-income Filipinos in provinces across the country. Microentrepreneurs, small farmers, and rural poor communities in the provinces will now be able to conduct m-commerce more efficiently and at a much lower cost.

The initiative was shortlisted out of more than 70 project ideas from organizations in 38 countries. GXI and RBAP-MABS will jointly undergo a two-stage process with CGAP's strategy committee for the project's approval and to determine the size of the grant.

"We congratulate your commitment to serving poor clients and look forward to make your vision a reality," said CGAP Technology Program Director Gautam Ivatury.

"We are excited to have been shortlisted in this program. We feel that this opportunity further strengthens our commitment to using GCash to improve the delivery of remittance and payment related services in rural areas. We remain steadfast in our objective to use pioneering wireless technology to reduce costs related to money transfer and micro-payments in the Philippines and globally," said GXI President Rizza Maniego-Eala.

"GXI's enhancements to the GCash platform have enabled MABS to design new mobile phone banking services that provide faster, more convenient, secure, and cost-effective ways to reach out to rural bank clients. We are eager to work with CGAP in the near future to expand and enhance these services further," said MABS Chief of Party, John Owens.

CGAP is a resource center for the microfinance industry, setting standards, offering technical and advisory services, training, and information on best practices, in addition to providing funding for innovative projects. Its 33 members – including bilateral, multilateral, and private donors – are committed to building more inclusive financial systems that work for the poor.

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*NOTE: Consistent with the Decision of the Supreme Court in G.R. No. 159940 in February 16, 2005, Career Executive Service (CES) / Career Service Executive Eligibility (CSEE) is not a mandatory qualification requirement for this vacancy.

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8) * Performance Appraisal Reports for the last two rating periods (for current government employees only);
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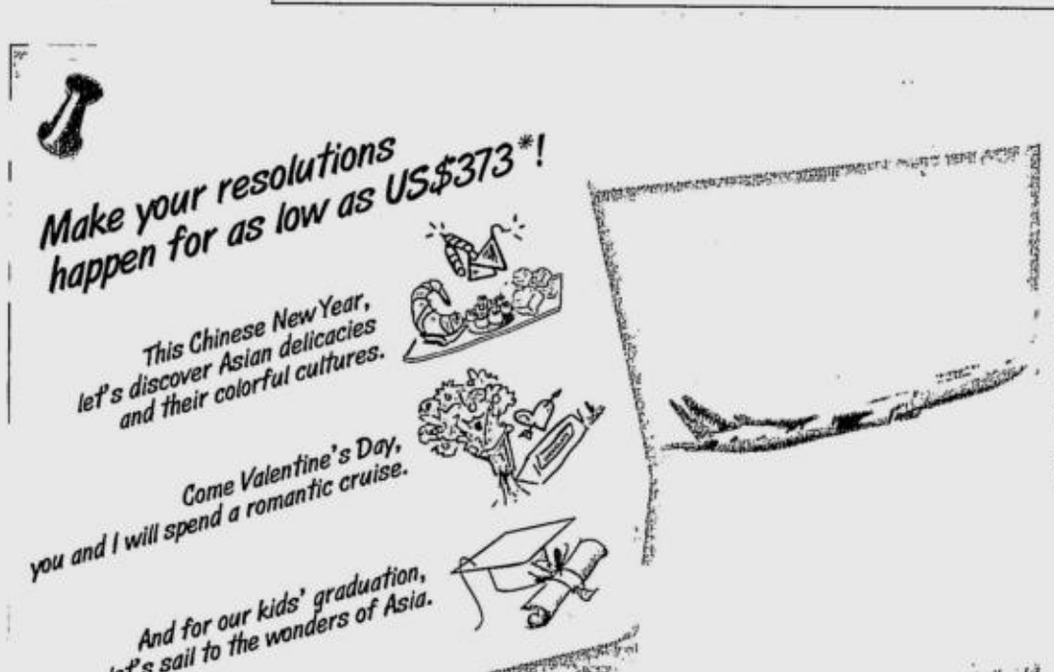

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CBCP STATEMENT ON THE NATION'S HOUSING PROBLEM

"Any person or family that, without any direct fault on his or her own, does not have suitable housing is the victim of an injustice."
(Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace on the International Year of Shelter for the Homeless, 1988)

As we close our Year of Social Concerns, we call the attention of our people to a grave problem that many, especially among the urban poor, suffer the lack of adequate housing. The Church teaches that *"the principle of the universal destination of goods requires that the poor, the marginalized and in all cases those whose living conditions interfere with their proper growth should be the focus of particular concern. To this end, the preferential option for the poor, and the decisions which it inspires in us, cannot but embrace the immense multitudes of the hungry, the needy, the homeless, those without health care and above all, those without hope for the future." (Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church #182)*

Adequate and humane dwelling is a basic right. *(cf. Compendium #166)* Their inadequacy breeds other problems such as immoralities in the home, the abuse of children, the lack of education of many young people, unhygienic conditions in the family, joblessness among the people, malnutrition of children, and criminality.

Our urban poor people, as human beings and children of God, have basic human rights to clean and inexpensive water. decent house, communities free of stagnant disease-ridden water, and uncollected garbage. They have a right to security of tenure, to be free of a constant threat of eviction and fire, and very importantly, they have a right to organize themselves to seek solutions to their problems in a democratic and a non-violent manner.

Despite their own efforts and those of many groups, including government and the Church, we cannot say our urban poor people enjoy these rights today.

We are all compelled to do everything possible to remedy this situation. We must all work that all may have their own homes that are suitable for God's persons who are made in God's image and likeness. We cannot achieve complete success in a short time. We lack resources for one thing but we can do something.

A. We call on those concerned to stop uncaring evictions and demolitions. We have laws in the land that tell us the proper processes for eviction. Let these laws be respected and followed, especially by law-enforcing agencies. Among other things, these laws provide us that relocation sites be prepared to receive the evicted families and that these sites should have adequate provisions for basic human needs, such as water, light, access roads, schooling for the children and work for the people. If plans and money are set aside for improvements of the cities and towns that would necessitate people to be moved elsewhere, also plans and money be set aside for the places where they are to be settled with painstaking consultations.

B. Government officials have made promises and even made official proclamations of lands to provide security of tenure to many poor families sitting on government properties. Many of these proclamations are not followed; they have remained empty words. Let the officials not play on the basic needs of the people, and cuddle them in pursuit of election victory.

C. As we did in our 1997 Letter on Homelessness, we again urge the immediate creation of a government-church-civil society commission that will provide guidelines for the further development of our cities so that the urban poor will have a decent place to live in and development will combine with sound environmental concern. The said commissions in each city and town can immdediately conduct consultations to discuss and resolve the issues on homelessness in a pro-active way. Planning of mass housing for the poor is a concern of public officials for the sake of the common good, and not only of property developers for their own profit.

D. We commend the initiatives of various groups who on their own provide for housing for our poor families. We encourage all people of goodwill, especially people of faith to support these groups or to create their own initiatives to help the homeless to be partners in pursuing the endeavor.

We cannot afford to be indifferent and complacent in front of this grave injustice that many of our brothers and sisters suffer day by day. We, as a Church, are committed to put the resources of the church towards this dream.

While Filipinos are getting known all over the world as good construction workers and builders, we are not able to provide houses for our homeless.

Let the dream of God for his people be ours. "Look, I am going to create new heavens and new earth. They will build houses and live in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. For the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, and my chosen ones will themselves use what they have made." (Is 65, 17-22)

Let us dream the dream of God and work that this dream may come true!

For the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines:

+ Angel N. Lagdameo

+ANGEL N. LAGDAMEO, D.D.
Archbishop of Jaro
President, CBCP

28 January 2007

GOD HEARS THE CRY OF THE POOR!

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advt

Leviste arrested, in jail for murder

From page A1

He was registered as detainee No. 517 yesterday, and is in Selda Tres (Cell No. 3) along with more than 70 other detainees, jail warden Supt. Delvic Oreiro said early last night.

The commitment order arrived at the police station at 5:30 p.m., and the ex-governor, escorted by Cruz, left the station for the detention facility 15 minutes later.

Boy Scout

"I was an outstanding Boy Scout in my time. I learned to live under mango trees, and I don't expect to stay long enough to suffer [in jail] because, hopefully, the judicial system will give me a fair and speedy trial," Leviste said at the briefing. "It is obvious that there are influential forces that are determined to harm me, even destroy me. But the Lord is my shield, and I fear not. And I know in the end I will [be] vindicated," he said.

Leviste surrendered to Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay hours after shooting De las Alas dead at his ninth-floor office in the LPL building between noon and 1 p.m. on Jan. 12. He claimed self-defense.

He was subsequently charged with homicide. But after a two-day reinvestigation by Senior State Prosecutor Emmanuel Velasco, conducted upon the request of the De las Alas family, the Department of Justice found the presence of "treachery, cruelty and premeditation" in the shooting and recommended that the charge be upgraded to murder.

With legal basis

Makati Judge Elmo Alameda ordered Leviste's arrest after granting the DOJ motion to upgrade the charge in light of the state prosecution's resolution finding probable cause to indict him for the heavier offense.

Alameda, presiding judge of Makati RTC Branch 150, said in the arrest order that he found the resolution "factual and [with] legal basis" after a "personal evaluation."

"The amended information is admitted and given due course. Let a warrant of arrest be issued for the apprehension of the accused, there being no bail recommended," he said.

Alameda also granted the prosecution's move to withdraw the original homicide case, canceled the P40,000 bail Leviste posted on Jan. 18, and issued a hold-departure order against him.

The judge further ruled that Leviste's manifestation filed on Monday—which asked the court to defer its ruling on the charge upgrade because of the defense's pending petition before the Court of Appeals—had "no leg to stand on."

The petition stated that the DOJ review of the case was irregular, and asked that it be stopped.

"Despite the court's observance of judicial courtesy in deference to the accused's application for a restraining order/preliminary injunction from the Court of Appeals, the accused failed to secure the relief sought," Alameda said.

The defense had made a last-ditch attempt to hold the court from resolving the recommended upgrade, and filed a motion asking Alameda to inhibit himself from handling the case because of "a well-grounded belief that [the judge] will no longer be impartial and objective."

But the court's order granting the upgrade was issued hours after the motion was filed at 9 a.m. yesterday.

The defense viewed this as procedural mishandling, but court staff said the order was already "for release" when the motion was filed.

Prejudgment

Leviste had refused to talk about the shooting, saying he would only divulge the details in court.

Yesterday, he lamented that the justice system had been working against him.

"Even that reinvestigation, forgive me for saying this ... I am not a lawyer. But even as a layman, I think it's a sham, it's a charade. There was prejudgment," he said.

What is making him sad is how his family has been affected by the case, Leviste said.

"It makes me sad that even my family is being dragged into this. My children have such a bright future. They've been very supportive, but I wish they didn't have to suffer like they are doing now," he said.

Toni Leviste, an accomplished equestrienne, talked about what the family was experiencing:

"It's never going to be easy. As you can imagine, it has been agonizing for us, especially after the lies and fabrications that have been thrown against him. However the case ends, they've already convicted my father.

"But if you have nothing to hide, nothing to run away from, you don't have to be afraid. I'm just surprised that I find so much strength and comfort in that. And that we are, as a family, stronger today than ever."

The ex-governor is estranged from former Sen. Loren Legarda, with whom he has two sons.

NBI summons more people

Senior State Prosecutor Velasco said Leviste's camp should take the upgraded charge of murder as an opportunity to tell the truth and to stop delaying the proceedings.

Velasco yesterday directed the National Bureau of Investigation to summon the people present in Leviste's office when the shooting took place, "including but not limited to" the ex-governor's security personnel, the security guards at the LPL building, and the persons mentioned by draftsman Manolito Ambrosio.

"I think the motion to inhibit Judge Alameda is a mere delaying tactic [by the defense], and we are asking them to just cooperate because they have been saying all along, especially Governor Leviste, that he's willing to tell the truth. This is the proper time to tell the truth," Velasco told reporters.

The DOJ had recommended that a number of John and Jane Does be charged with murder along with Leviste. It had also said the crime scene was tampered with before the police could process it. *With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

Gringo allowed to leave jail to file candidacy

By Jerome Aning

FLANKED BY MEMBERS OF HIS FAMILY and watched by police escorts, detained former senator Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan yesterday filed his certificate of candidacy for the May 14 senatorial elections.

"I would like to continue the programs that I started to serve the purpose of my generation," Honasan told reporters after filing his certificate of candidacy at the Commission on Elections at around 9 a.m.

Honasan, 58, did not directly answer questions on whether he would be joining any party, particularly the so called "Unity Team" being set up by the administration.

"I have always run as an independent, but we welcome any expression of support from any group—the administration, the opposition or individuals—and we are open to endorse common programs," he said.

He told reporters he would bat for "peace, unity and reconciliation," but offered nothing when asked about his platform before he was hustled away.

'Adviser on failed coups'

Honasan, who once joked that he was the country's "resident adviser on failed coup attempts," went into hiding for nine months before he was captured in November.

The 28th person to file his candidacy for senator, Honasan arrived at the Comelec escorted by members of the national police's Special Action Force.

He was accompanied by his wife Jane, children Kim and Kai, and his lawyer Daniel Gutierrez.

Gutierrez said his client would be running as an independent candidate in the May polls and would launch a proxy campaign using close friends.

Honasan left Fort Domingo in Sta. Rosa, Laguna at around 7:30 a.m. and arrived at the Comelec office about an hour later.

He was earlier allowed by a Makati court to personally file his certificate of candidacy at the Comelec headquarters in Intramuros, Manila.

Honasan was senator from 1995 to 2004. A former Army colonel, he was a key leader in the Edsa People Power Revolution that ousted dictator Ferdinand Marcos in 1986.

Guardians

After staging several coup attempts against Marcos' successor Corazon Aquino, Honasan was arrested but later amnestied.

Last year, he was charged with rebellion in connection with the mutiny staged by about 300 junior military officers in July 2003.

About 100 of Honasan's supporters, mostly from the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc., which he co-founded, gathered in front of the Comelec building to show him their support. *With a report from AFP*

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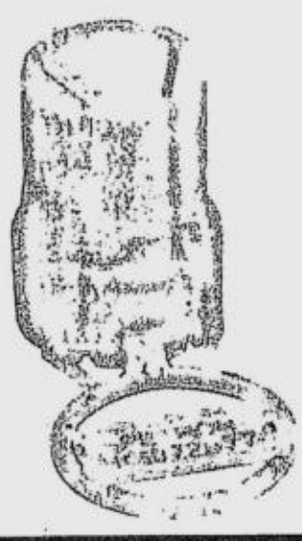

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MONEY BACK GUARANTEE

By Cynthia D. Balana, Michael Lim Ubac, and Jerome Aning

FINALLY, SEN. EDGARDO ANGARA YESTERday accepted President Macapagal-Arroyo's offer for him to join the administration coalition's Team Unity ticket for the May senatorial elections.

At a press conference in the Senate, Angara said he arrived at his decision after nationwide consultations with supporters and leaders and members of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino (LDP), which he heads.

"I did not switch political affiliation. I shall continue to be and remain in LDP, the only political party I have been with during my entire political career," he said.

The releectionist senator said he was joining the administration ticket in which people of different opinions come together for the sake of national progress and unity.

"Politics is deteriorating, stuck in hate and negativism, which I reject. Politics should be relevant to the lives of people and not be seen as a destructive force," he said.

With Angara now part of the administration coalition's slate, nine senatorial aspirants have made it to the Team Unity.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said the administration's senatorial candidates were Representatives Prospero Pichay Jr. and Juan Miguel Zubiri, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor, reelectionist Senators Angara, Ralph Recto and Joker Arroyo, former Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta, and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

About Richard Gomez, De Venecia said there was still "questions" surrounding the actor's inclusion in the Team Unity.

Zubiri yesterday became the first member of the Team Unity's slate to file his certificate of candidacy.

"I filed to avoid intrigues and speculations. The other administration candidates will follow," said Zubiri, 37, when he filed his certificate at 5 p.m. at the Commission on Elections headquarters in Manila.

He was accompanied by his wife, model Audrey Kaye Tan.

Zubiri's certificate of candidacy was accompanied by his formal nomination by President Macapagal-Arroyo and De Venecia, chair and president of the ruling Lakas-CMD party, and a document showing that he underwent drug testing and passed it.

Asked what his platform would be, Zubiri said he would concentrate on agriculture, the industrialization of the countryside, education and youth welfare.

He said he would also work for more benefits for farmers, a total log ban policy and a more stringent drive against illegal drugs.

Angara said he, along with his political party, joined Team Unity on the understanding that the coalition would focus state resources on education, health, infrastructure, agricultural modernization, job creation, and environmental protection.

He said the coalition would adhere to good governance and a stepped-up effort to combat corruption, which was also in accordance with the LDP program of government.

Angara said the President first made the offer for him to join the administration senatorial slate as early as last reiterated this when they saw each Malacañang at a forum on Monday.

He said he did not give it a serious then because he was involved in tions for the formation of a so-call Force in the 2007 elections to be c of "moderate" re-electionist senator

The negotiations, however, colla said, because its core group—the day Group—composed of Senate P Manny Villar, Francis Pangilinan, J royo and Ralph Recto seemed to ha separate ways.

Angara said he was informed tha and Recto would join the Team Uni Villar was joining the United Op (UNO) ticket.

He said he was not aware of Pan choice.

Justifying his coalition with the tration that was responsible for th of his former boss, former Presiden Estrada, Angara said he had nothi plain to the voters because they we of what really happened during years.

Angara was executive secretary da when the latter was ousted b power and succeeded by Ms Arroy da's vice president.

Angara explained that it was no time that he coalesced with the ad tion in pushing for meaningful legis

4,000 chase 20 slots for

WASHINGTON—WOULD-BE US ASTRONauts have to undergo rigorous training and stringent selection procedures if they want to join an elite body of just 135 people, mostly men, and journey to the stars.

With more than 4,000 applicants chasing just 20 places available every two years, competition is tight and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (Nasa) sets tough standards for the physically and mentally challenging job.

"The astronauts of the 21st century will help lead Nasa through the next steps of its 'Vision for Space Exploratio'nas we explore the Moon, Mars, and beyond," Nasa says in its careers section on its website.

Air Force and Navy pilots as aeronautical engineers are in h mand, but top scientists can also b upon to be mission specialists, w stressing that people with a wide experience such as teachers and ologists can also play vital roles.

Only US citizens can apply thr Nasa program and although the age limit, the average age is ar years old.

The minimum requirement to lot astronaut is a bachelor's degr gineering, science or mathemat an accredited institution.

Three years of related experie

Moonstruck astronaut c

From page A1

not detected before this.

Nowak was arrested at 4 a.m. on Monday at Orlando International Airport, the police said, after attacking Colleen Shipman, an Air Force captain.

According to the Orlando police report, Nowak said she saw Shipman as a rival for the affection of Cmdr. William A. Oefelein, a fellow astronaut who is divorced.

Nowak, 43, a divorced mother of three, was arraigned at 8:30 a.m. The judge had agreed to release Nowak on $15,000 bond on charges of kidnapping and battery, but the police added a charge of attempted murder, and bail was increased to $25,000.

The attempted murder charge could mean life imprisonment if she were convicted.

Nowak posted bail and was fitted with an electronic bracelet so that her movements can be monitored after her return to Houston.

Shipman, Nowak's reported rival for Oefelein's affections, is a 30-year-old engineer who works at the 45th Launch Support Squadron at Patrick air base. She is a student pilot, and lives near Port Canaveral, Florida.

Psychological evaluations

Nick Kanas, a professor of psychology at the University of California, San Francisco, who has studied astronaut psychology, said that psych screening of astronaut candid curs only at the beginning of the and that once an astronaut ha through the front door, the for chological evaluations give way uations of job performance.

He said: "These people are ex well-suited, by personality and t to deal with the stresses of being That doesn't mean that they're nerable to emotional problems, lems in their relationships."

Nowak told police she "only w scare" Shipman into talking to he

In two separate appearances wearing a jail uniform, shackle waist and with her head bowed said nothing about the charge tempted murder and kidnapp tempted burglary of a vehicle tery.

A bail bondsman said Nowak pected to fly back to Houston We and it was not clear when she w pear in court again.

'The Right Stuff'

Nasa's astronaut corps, feat Tom Wolfe's 1979 book "The Righ is considered the elite of aerosp science, populated by top pilots a researchers from the United Sta other nations.

But prosecutors said Nowak w on murder.

"She had a mission that she

US sent $4B to Iraq ...

From page A1

dollars from the UN-run oil-for-food program and frozen assets belonging to the ousted Saddam Hussein regime.

Bills weighing a total of 363 tons were loaded onto military aircraft in the largest cash shipments ever made by the Federal Reserve, said Rep. Henry Waxman, chair of the House of Representatives Committee on Oversight and Government Reform.

"Who in their right mind would send 363 tons of cash into a war zone? But that's exactly what our government did," the California Democrat said during a hearing reviewing possible waste, fraud and abuse of funds in Iraq.

On Dec. 12, 2003, $1.5 billion was shipped to Iraq, initially "the largest pay out of US currency in Fed history," according to an e-mail cited by committee members.

Request of finance chief

It was followed by more than $2.4 billion on June 22, 2004, and $1.6 billion three days later. The CPA turned over sovereignty on June 28.

Paul Bremer, who as the administrator of the Coalition Provisional Authority ran Iraq after initial combat operatic ed, said the enormous shipmen done at the request of the Iraqi mi finance.

"He said, 'I am concerned that I have the money to support the Ir ernment expenses for the first c months after we are sovereign. W have the mechanisms in place, know how to get the money her mer said.

"So these shipments were mad explicit request of the Iraqi minis nance to forward fund governn penses, a perfectly, seems to m mate use of his money," Bremer t makers.

Where's the money?

Democrats led by Waxman al tioned whether the lack of over $12 billion in Iraqi money that bursed by Bremer and the CP how enabled insurgents to g hands on the funds, possibly falsifying names on the gove payroll.

"I have no knowledge of moni diverted. I would certainly be co if I thought they were," Bremer pointed out that the problem

ANNOUNCEMENT

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM
CIRCULAR NO. 34 - P

TO : ALL SSS MEMBERS, EMPLOYERS AND PARTICIPATING FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

SUBJECT : CONDONATION, RESTRUCTURING AND *DACION EN PAGO* PROGRAMS FOR DELINQUENT HOUSING LOAN BORROWERS

Hereunder are the guidelines for the Condonation, Restructuring and *Dacion En Pago* programs for delinquent housing loan borrowers, pursuant to Social Security Commission (SSC) Resolution No. 254-s.2006 dated 05 July 2006 and approved by the President of the Philippines on 30 September 2006.

I. WHO ARE QUALIFIED TO APPLY

1. Condonation, Restructuring and *Dacion En Pago* Programs:
   a. Delinquent borrowers under the following Direct Housing Loan Programs:
      a.1 Individual Housing Loan
      a.2 Corporate Housing Loan
      a.3 Repair and Improvement Housing Loan
      a.4 SSS-NHA Apartment/Dormitory Housing Loan
      a.5 SSS Employee Housing Loan
      a.6 Sold Acquired Assets
   b. Heirs of deceased borrowers under the Direct Housing Loan Programs with unpaid balance after application of MRI Proceeds.
   c. Buyers of mortgaged property under the Direct Housing Loan Programs with Deed of Conditional Sale or Deed of Absolute Sale.
2. Condonation but not Restructuring and *Dacion En Pago* Programs:
   a. Delinquent borrowers under the Direct Housing Loan Facility for Trade Union Members (TUM) and Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW).
   b. Delinquent borrowers whose properties have been foreclosed with registered Certificate of Sale but not yet transferred in the name of the SSS.
   c. Delinquent borrowers of Participating Financial Institutions (PFIs) under receivership of Philippine Deposit Insurance Corporation.
   d. Employers who are delinquent in remittance of their employees' housing loan amortizations under the SSS Corporate Housing Loan Program and Direct Individual Housing Loan Program.
   e. PFIs who are delinquent in the remittance of SSS member-borrowers' housing loan amortizations under the Pari-Passu Loan Program and mortgaged properties located at Cherry Hills Subdivision in Antipolo.

II. WHAT ARE THE TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Availment period is from December 15, 2006 to June 15, 2007.
2. Deadline for payment, signing of Supplemental Mortgage Contract/*Dacion En* Pago and filing of application is on June 15, 2007.
3. For Condonation Program:
   a. A minimum amount of Five Thousand Pesos (Php5,000) shall be paid upon availment of the condonation program. If the amount of the arrears is less than Php5,000, the borrower may still qualify for the condonation program provided he pays in full the principal, interest and collectible continuing interest (CI).
   b. The amount of penalty and CI to be condoned is equivalent to the amount paid. The maximum amount to be condoned shall be 100% of the penalty and 50% of CI as of payment date. The other 50% of the CI is collectible from the borrower.

   If the total obligation (Principal, Interest, 50% collectible CI) is fully paid, all penalties and 50% of the CI are fully condoned.

Example: Statement of Account as of Sept. 30, 2006:

Principal	Php	50,000
Interest	Php	30,000
CI	Php	90,000
Penalty	Php	100,000
Condonable CI	Php	45,000
Condonable Penalty	Php	100,000

In the above example, supposing the borrower paid Php10,000 to avail of the condonation, the application of the payment will be as follows:

Amount Payable

Principal	Php	50,000
Interest		30,000
CI		45,000
Total	Php	125,000
Less: Payment		10,000
Balance	Php	115,000

Amount Condonable

Condonable CI	Php	45,000
Condonable Penalty		100,000
Total	Php	145,000
Less: Amount Condoned		(10,000)
Balance	Php	135,000

If the Php115,000 balance is fully paid within the six-month condonation period, the condonable balance of Php135,000 shall be fully condoned.

4. For Restructuring Program:
   a. Loan restructuring shall be allowed after the availment of the condonation program.
   b. The restructured amount shall be the sum of the outstanding principal balance, accrued interests, collectible portion of CI, insurance premiums and foreclosure expenses excluding penalty and condonable CI.
   c. The restructured loan shall be subject to the following fixed interest rates:

Amount	Interest Rate (per annum)
Php300,000 and below	9%
Php300,001 up to Php500,000	10%
Php500,001 and above	11%

   d. The restructured term may be extended up to a period of ten (10) years, provided it is not longer than the original loan term and the sum of the restructured term plus the borrower's age shall not exceed 70.
   e. Any unpaid amortization after the due date shall be subject to a penalty of one and one-half percent (1 ½%) per month until fully paid.
   f. The remaining CI and penalties shall continue to be condoned, provided the borrower is not delinquent. A borrower becomes delinquent if he fails to pay an equivalent of six (6) months' amortizations.

      If the borrower becomes delinquent, the remaining penalties and condonable portion of the CI shall form part of the total outstanding obligation, which shall be due and demandable.

   g. In case of death of the borrower, the account may be assumed by either:
      • Any relative within the first civil degree by consanguinity (i.e. parents, children) or affinity (i.e. parent-in-law, son/daughter in-law); or
      • Buyers of the mortgaged property with Deed of Conditional Sale or Deed of Absolute Sale.
5. For *Dacion En Pago*
   a. The borrower may be allowed to continue occupying the property provided he executes a Lease Contract or Lease Purchase Agreement.
   b. The former owner/successor-in-interest/lawful occupant may repurchase the property as provided for under SSC Resolution No. 417 s. 2002 (Policy Guidelines for the Disposal of SSS Acquired Assets).
6. A borrower who pays within the availment period is eligible to participate in the Homeowners' Assistance Program.

WHAT ARE THE MECHANICS OF THE HOMEOWNERS' ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (HAP)

a. The HAP is open to both delinquent and currently paying housing loan borrowers

b. Twenty (20) HAP prizes at Php20,000 each shall be raffled off to borrowers who will pay within the condonation period.
c. A delinquent borrower who availed of the program is entitled to one (1) computer- generated raffle entry for every Php5,000 payment while those currently paying will be entitled to one (1) computer-generated raffle entry for every Php1,000 payment.
d. A borrower shall only win once.
e. If the borrower wins, the prize money shall be applied to his loan balance, if any. Any excess shall be paid to the borrower.
f. SSS employee-borrowers are disqualified to participate in the raffle draw.

III. HOW TO AVAIL OF THE PROGRAMS

1. Individual Members

a. The borrower shall accomplish the Application for Condonation, Restructuring and *Dacion en Pago* Programs and indicate the type of program he wants to participate in.

b. The borrower shall be issued an acknowledgement stub, which shall serve as proof of participation in the Condonation and Restructuring Programs.

c. Condonation

c.1 Upon presentation of the acknowledgement stub, the Statement of Account (SA), List of Posted Payments (LPP) and Real Estate Payment Return Form (REL-9) stamped "With Application for Condonation of Penalty" will be issued to the borrower.

c.2 The payable amount maybe paid at one time or in installments at the option of the borrower at the nearest SSS branch with tellering facility or SSS accredited banks and payment facilities.

d. Restructuring

The borrower and spouse (if married), authorized representative, legal heirs, or buyers of mortgaged property shall be required to execute a Supplemental Mortgage Contract/Assumption of Mortgage/ Supplemental Deed of Conditional Sale and the corresponding promissory note.

e. Dacion En Pago

The borrower shall execute the following:

- Notarized Affidavit of Offer to *Dacion*
- Dacion *En Pago* Agreement (signed by both the borrower and spouse, if married).
- Lease *Contract* or Lease-Purchase Agreement (if the borrower opts to rent the *property*).

2. Employers/PFIs

The employer/PFI shall submit the application form together with the collection list of borrowers and proof of payment to the nearest SSS branch.

Please be guided accordingly.

CORAZON S. DE LA PAZ
President and CEO

Approved by:

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

THELMO Y. CUNANAN
Chairman

20 December 2006

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tion's Team Unity senatorial ticket

ear and other in thought negotia- d Third mposed sed, he Wednes- resident oker Ar- ve gone Arroyo ty while position ilinan's dminis- ouster Joseph g to ex- e aware ll these f Estra- people , Estra- the first inistra- ation.

He engaged in "critical collaboration" with the administration of then President Fidel Ramos, when he was an opposition leader and Senate President.

That collaboration, he said, produced several landmark legislation, which laid the foundation for the country's near-tiger economic status.

"The one lesson I learned early on was that of Manuel Quezon, the star of Baler, a great nationalist and patriot who always placed the country above personal and partisan interest. They were true during Quezon's time, and remain true and relevant today," he said.

Speaker's wife

As the administration scrambled to complete its 12-member Team Unity slate, the wife of the Speaker emerged as a potential senatorial candidate.

Gina De Venecia said she would decide before Feb. 12, the deadline for all senatorial bets to file their certificates of candidacy, whether she would run.

"I'm still thinking about it. Still praying for discernment," said De Venecia, known to her colleagues as "Manay Gina."

Loren joins NPC wing

In a related development, former Sen. Loren Legarda has joined the Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) to formalize her acceptance of the United Opposition's offer for her to lead its senatorial ticket.

Legarda became a member of NPC-Francis "Chiz" Escudero (opposition) wing on Wednesdy night.

The NPC is currently part of the administration but Legarda said NPC leaders had allowed its members to be independent in their stand on many issues. *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

journey to stars

well as igh de- e called th Nasa ange of nicrobi- ugh the re is no und 34 be a pi- e in en- cs from ce must

follow and an advanced degree is desirable. Pilot astronauts must also have at least 1,000 hours of experience in jet aircraft, and they need good eyesight.

All applicants have to be in tip-top physical health and are required to undergo a strict medical exam. They must be between 5 feet 4 inches (1.6 meters) and 6 feet 4 inches (1.9 meters) tall.

Once chosen, the applicants follow physical and theoretical training at the Johnson Space Center in Houston, Texas, which lasts between 18 months to two years, and lays the groundwork for complex space missions such as on the International Space Station. *AFP*

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logical tes oc- process gotten al psy- to eval- tremely raining, space. ot vul- r prob- nted to court, at the Nowak of at- ng, at- nd bat- was ex- inesday uld ap- ired in t Stuff," ce and d space tes and s intent as very

determined to carry out," said prosecutor Amanda Cowan. "Murder was the plan."

Nowak drove to Orlando airport around midnight on Sunday, waited for Shipman's flight from Houston to arrive and then followed her to the parking garage. Nowak tried to get into Shipman's car and sprayed the pepper spray through the window when Shipman refused to open the door, police said.

After the airport encounter, Shipman filed a petition for a restraining order against Nowak, alleging the astronaut had been stalking her for "approximately two months."

Out of character

Nowak told police she did not intend to harm Shipman. In her statement, she described her connection to Oefelein as "more than a working relationship but less than a romantic relationship."

Nowak, who grew up in Rockville, Maryland, and attended the US Naval Academy in Annapolis, became an astronaut in 1996 and waited 10 years for her first space flight.

Her family described her as "a very intelligent, accomplished individual," who recently separated from her husband after 19 years of marriage.

"Considering both her personal and professional life, these alleged events are completely out of character and have come as a tremendous shock to our family," the family said in a statement. *New York Times, Reuters*

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names on the payroll existed before the US-led invasion.

The special inspector general for Iraqi reconstruction, Stuart Bowen, said in a January 2005 report that $8.8 billion was unaccounted for after being given to the Iraqi ministries.

No banking system

"We were in the middle of a war, working in very difficult conditions, and we had to move quickly to get this Iraqi money working for the Iraqi people," Bremer told lawmakers. He said there was no banking system and it would have been impossible to apply modern accounting standards in the midst of a war.

"I acknowledge that I made mistakes and that, with the benefit of hindsight, I would have made some decisions differently," Bremer said.

Republicans argued that Bremer and the CPA staff did the best they could under the circumstances and accused Democrats of trying to score political points over the increasingly unpopular Iraq war.

"We are in a war against terrorists, to have a blame meeting isn't, in my opinion, constructive," said Rep. Dan Burton, an Indiana Republican. *Reuters*

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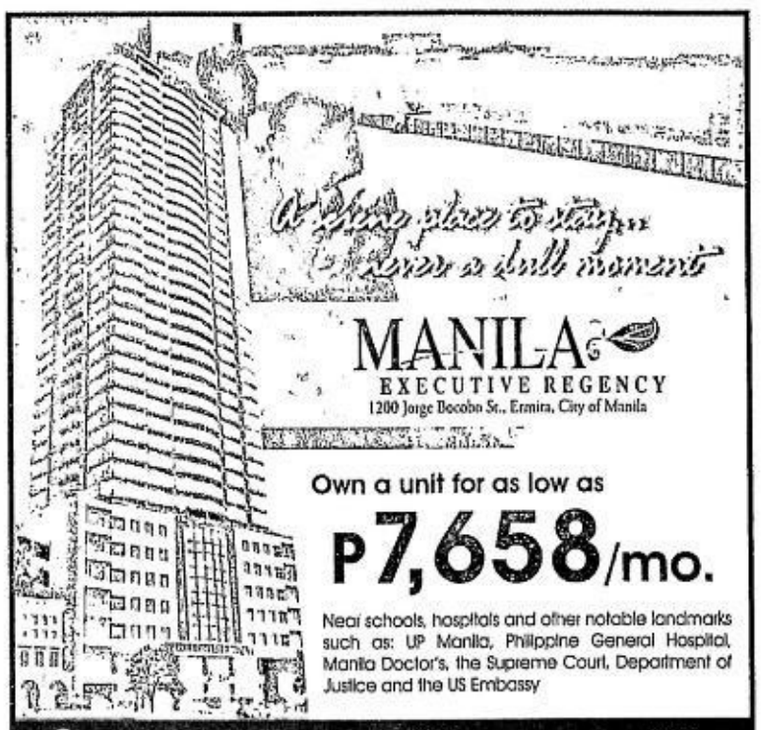

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OPINION

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Swift justice?

HOUSE DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER ALAN Peter Cayetano is probably enjoying himself these days. All the publicity he is getting couldn't hurt his chances of joining his sister Pia in the Senate after the May elections. And it would boost his candidacy even more if he could paint himself as a victim of Malacañang's vindictiveness and the servility of his colleagues to President Macapagal-Arroyo and the First Family.

EDITORIAL

Cayetano is a victim all right, but hardly an innocent one. He was suspended for a period of 45 days Tuesday by the ethics committee of the House of Representatives for "improper conduct and unparliamentary behavior" for allegedly accusing unfairly the First Family of maintaining an account worth millions of dollars in a German bank. He made the allegation in a privilege speech he delivered on Sept. 6, 2006, but could not produce any evidence to support his charge.

HypoVereins Bank in Munich, which Cayetano identified as the First Family's depository bank, has certified that no member of the First Family had any account or conducted any transaction with the bank in the past 10 years. But he dismissed as a hoax the waiver made by First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo allowing HypoVereins to reveal the existence of his account if he had any, saying it did not cover all the accounts or transactions of the First Family in the Philippines and abroad. Caught without anything to support his accusation, he wanted to have the way cleared for him to go fishing all over the world.

Cayetano complained that the ethics committee acted prematurely when it took up his case and voted for his suspension. He said the members of the committee couldn't say his accusation had no basis because the House never investigated his charge against the Arroyos. If he were to be expelled for his exposé on the Arroyos, he added, half of the membership of the House should also be expelled for making privilege speeches and resolutions charging other people with anomalies.

Why not, indeed. If they were as reckless as he was in hurling charges without proof and taking liberties with the reputations of other people, they don't deserve to remain in Congress.

What Cayetano failed to mention was that he had all the time in the world to prove his charges, but he didn't—or couldn't—do it. Now he is saying it is Congress' collective responsibility to prove or disprove any allegation made by any of its members. It's a prescription for the reckless and irresponsible use of the privilege speech.

But Cayetano has a point when he notes the big difference between the way the ethics committee dealt with his case and the way the House handled the impeachment complaint against President Arroyo. While the House voted to dismiss the impeachment complaint without looking at the evidence, the ethics committee came up with a finding of guilty also without examining any evidence. And with a swiftness that was breathtaking.

The House team that went to Munich to check with the bank came home Monday. The next day, Cayetano was tried and promptly found guilty as charged.

But what else can one expect from a body that is driven solely by numbers? If the House could vote to suppress the presentation of evidence of election cheating against the President because her allies have a numerical superiority, it could just as easily railroad a vote to punish a colleague who has displeased the powers that be. Once again, the President's allies has demonstrated the tyranny of the majority.

US accountability

IT SEEMS AN AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL REPORT CRITICISing Israel for using cluster bombs in Lebanon' s civilian areas in the final days of last summer's conflict with Hezbollah was right.

And the word coming from Washington indicates that Israel is "likely" to have violated terms of its arms deals with the former, which place restrictions on the use of such bombs.

FOREIGN COMMENT

Organizations like the International Committee of the Red Cross have rightly called for a complete ban on cluster bombs in populated areas. The main reason is that upon use they scatter into hundreds of small bomblets over a wide range, causing indiscriminate deaths.

As the US Congress mulls an appropriate course of action, it will no doubt bear in mind that at $2 billion per annum, America is by far Israel's biggest military donor. As such, much of the responsibility of Israel's excesses comes to eventually rest on Uncle Sam's shoulders.

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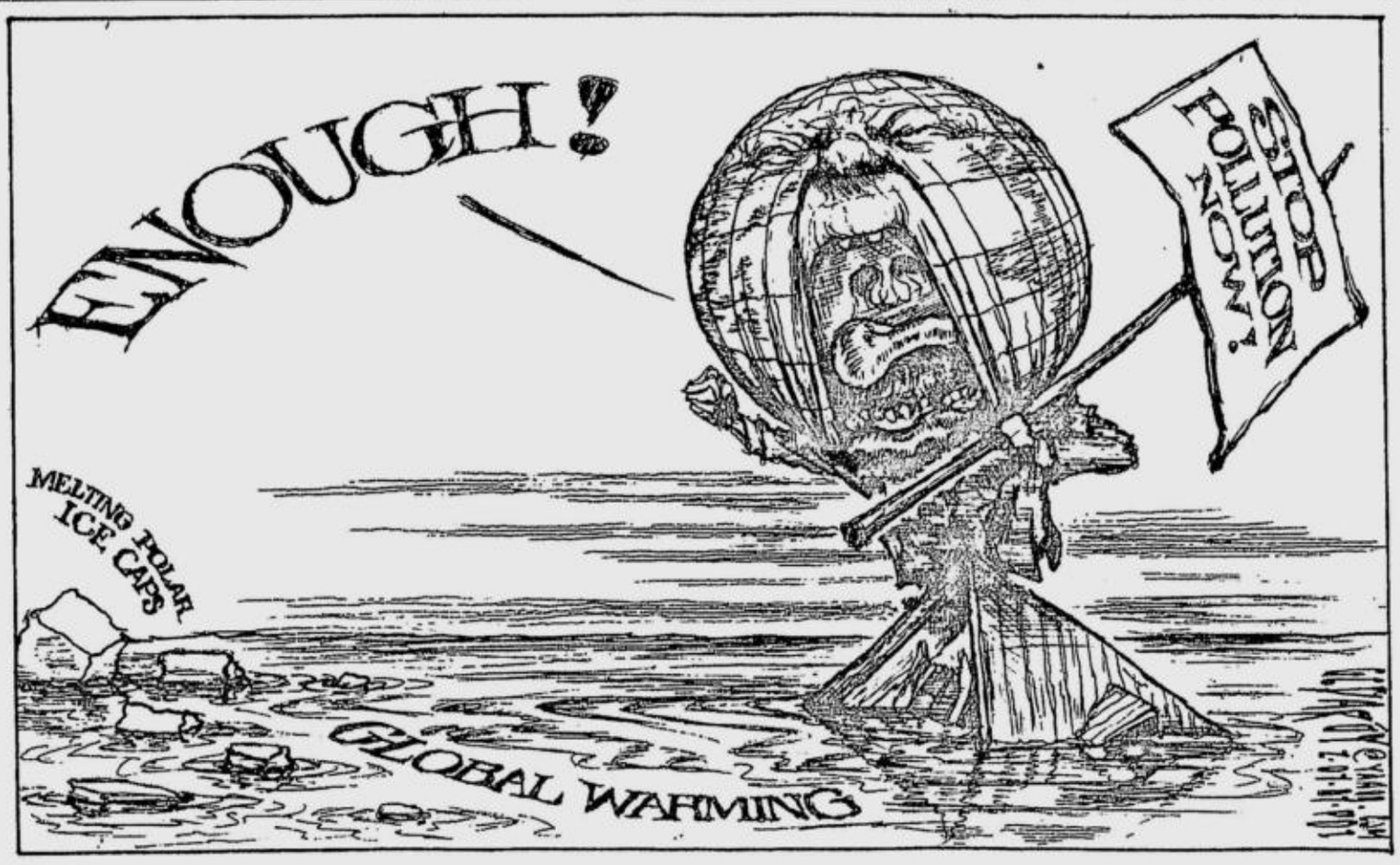

Barrabas or Barrabas—yet again

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

COME THE MAY ELECTIONS, WILL OUR CHOIces as voters be handcuffed yet again to choosing between Barrabas and Barrabas?

This question stems from the frenzied jockeying between a tattered administration and a tainted opposition to hijack every "electable" candidate within reach, both for the Senate and local posts. "In politics, an absurdity is not a handicap," the emperor Napoleon once argued.

So "high-moral-ground" candidates, like Francis Escudero, trot meekly behind opposition "chairman emeritus" Joseph Estrada who is garlanded with still-to-be-resolved plunder charges. Not content with a charming, ineffective Loi Estrada in the Senate, Erap would dump on the slate yet another son. San Juan Mayor JV Ejercito, like his brother, Sen. Jinggoy Estrada, is bereft of credentials—except for dad's commodious wallet. "Money can hide a thousand deformities," an old proverb says. Even a Kamag-anak Inc.?

Admit it or not, some opposition candidates remind people of a police line-up. Panfilo Lacson is a star alumnus of the Marcos dictatorship's torture chamber, the Military Intelligence Security Group. Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano wrings media mileage from repeating his bum charge of secret German bank accounts owned by a First Gentleman who'll win any unpopularity contest hands down. "What I say three times is true," says the Rabbit in "Alice in Wonderland." But even a cub reporter knows that serial fibbing is a firing offense.

The President is garlanded with still-to-be-resolved electoral legitimacy issues. But the ruling party has deep pockets and patronage, too. And she has shrewdly wooed senators with solid track records, like Senators Edgardo Angara, Joker Arroyo and Ralph Recto.

Admit it or not, some of the regime's candidates remind one of those routine NBI raiding team photo ops. Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, for one, won't win Good Housekeeping seals soon. Ask "Chavit's" former gambling buddy: Atong Ang, now plea-bargaining from the clink, to beat a possible life term. And Surigao del Sur's Rep. Prospero Pichay would win any *tuta* (subservience) contest hands down. *El dinero hace andar a la yegua*. ("Money makes the mare gallop.")

Speaker Jose de Venecia, meanwhile, wants to jam Tessie Aquino-Oreta and Tito Sotto into the senatorial slate. Like John Osmeña who flipped into the opposition slate, Oreta and Sotto are certified "Craven Eleven" alumni. Tessie shasayed on the Senate floor after 11 colleagues sealed the "second envelope" in the Estrada impeachment trial. And comedian Sotto's Senate track record is zero. "To succeed in other trades, capacity must be shown," Mark Twain wrote. "In (politics) concealment is enough."

Qualifications and issues will again be trashed in the coming polls. Thus, boxer par excellence Manny Pacquiao frantically seeks an elective post—any post—that he can throw his fight money at. Actor what's-his-name threatens to run for a Senate that once boasted of a Claro Recto, Lorenzo Tañada and Emmanuel Pelaez. He still does not get it. Emoting feelings from A to B (all right, up to "C," then) is not what senators are elected for.

Without exception, these patently unqualified candidates insist they are "sincere." Reminds one of the late Charles Schulz's prize-winning comic-strip "Peanuts": A depressed Charlie Brown stands atop the pitcher's mound. Visitors had creamed his baseball team. "But we were so sincere," he wails to "Snoopy," his beagle. Martin Luther King put it another way: "There is nothing more dangerous than well-intentioned sincerity."

Today's state of affairs places a premium on mediocrity. This year, we're again locked into lesser-evil choices. This straight-jacket option confronts us even as the elbow room for solving critical national problems, from shoddy schools to festering insurgencies, narrows.

Many voters settle for candidates who warble the latest pop song, dance the *otso-otso* on stage—and give a dole. *Mababaw ang ating kaligayan*. The Barrabas-or-Barrabas choice, therefore, is an image of us as electors. "Mirror, mirror on the wall," an old fairy tale went.

"All democracies live in fear of the ignorant," Harvard's John Kenneth Gailbraith writes. "There must be either a knowledgeable electorate, abreast of these issues ... or a surrender to the voices of ignorance and error."

Sure, there is a groping for alternatives. There are persistent mumblings about a "Third Force." That's "an index of the despair and revulsion ordinary people feel about traditional politics and gross corruption," Institute for Studies in Asian Church and Culture Melba Padilla-Maggay wrote earlier. "More important are committed men and women whose dormant energies are being roused, their imagination afire with the vision of a nation rising from the ashes."

But will a "Third Force" fly now? Many don't wait to find out. Daily, over 3,568 Filipinos take off or ship out. Last year alone, 1.2 million left for jobs in 160 countries. Given half the chance, 19, out of every 100, would go for good, earlier Pulse Asia surveys reported.

There's a belief that this democratic alternative will come, not from the traditional dynasties and structures that Ms Arroyo and Estrada et al. fiddle with. Ultimately, it will spring from ordinary citizens who faithfully work at daily duties and share of themselves with the poor.

"It's wrong-headed to ask whether a country is fit for democracy," Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen writes. "Rather, it has to become fit through democracy."

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

Footnote to doomsday

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

FRANKLY, I DON'T KNOW WHY THE DEMOcrats are limiting their choices only to people like Hilary Clinton and Barack Obama for 2008. Of course, I'd like nothing better than to see the first woman president of America. About time it had one. And given that Nancy Pelosi, the first woman Speaker of the House, has broken the barriers, Hilary seems to have a good crack at the White House. And, of course, I'd like nothing better than to see the first mulatto become president of America, which would break an even bigger American taboo.

But there is better. It comes in the person of Al Gore. I don't know why he shouldn't be shoo-in.

It's not just because he will be fighting a Republican foe laboring under George W. Bush's jagged shadow. It's also because hindsight has shown that Bush did not just lie about the weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, he lied about the votes he got in Florida. Gore should have been US president way back in 2000. I don't know why he can't get a bagful of sympathy votes for that alone. Surely the American voters know how to pay back someone they owe, and owe big?

But far, far more than that, it's because Gore has not just become the biggest thing in America of late, he's become the biggest thing in the planet of late. That is because his crusade to save the planet from its biggest scourge, which is its annihilation by man-made global warming, has just been given a terrific push by the recent report of a UN panel of scientists saying global warming is real, global warming is dire, and global warming is here. There are no ifs and buts about it: The planet is dying even as we speak.

Of course, that report comes well before the American presidential elections of 2008, but it is not likely to be forgotten—neither by the American voters nor indeed by the citizens of the world. The reason for it—a most frightening one—is that there will be no lack of terrifying reminders of it over the next couple of years. The report predicts that in the immediate future, we are going to have intolerable heat waves and droughts along with storms, hurricanes and cyclones of mind-boggling fury. And further on in that future, unless something drastic is done to stop it, another Ice Age. The super storms that hit this country late last year, packing winds of more than 200 kph, already gave a hint of the shape of things to come. As does Hurricane Katrina, which flattened out New Orleans a couple of years ago. If the report is to be believed, things won't get better, they will get worse.

That makes Gore not just the most winnable president of the United States, that makes him the most relevant one. That makes Gore not just the most tenable president of the United States, that makes him the most important one. What is at stake is not merely America's ability and authority to lead the world to progress, what is at stake is America's ability and authority to lead the world to survival. What is at stake is not just the future of America, what is at stake is the continued existence of humankind.

Of course, George W. Bush's people have been quick to spin the report and conscript it to their cause. Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman said the report confirmed what Bush had been saying all along about "the nature of climate change, and it reaffirms the need for continued US leadership in addressing global climate issues." Well, Bush does share one quality with Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo, which is the ability to lie through his teeth. And which, as in these parts, has been imbibed by his lieutenants.

The Republicans, in fact, had been harshly condemning Gore for making the predictions he did, which they are now claiming as their own. Bush's father, George Sr. said of Gore then (Gore had been campaigning for saving the earth way back): "This guy is so far off in the environmental extreme we'll be up to our neck in owls and out of work for every American. This guy's crazy." Well, Bush Sr. must know something about crazy that we don't. He offered a toast to Marcos for his adherence to democracy.

This guy's crazy? Well, Gore was crazy enough to be saying—well before it became popular to do so, indeed when it was the political kiss of death to do so—that there was no doubt about the reality, immediacy and direness of global warming except the doubts Exxon et al. were trying to spread about it, in the same way that the cigarette companies tried to spread doubts about the ironclad medical finding that smoking caused lung cancer. Gore was crazy enough to be saying—well before it became relevant to do so, indeed when it was the political kiss of death to do so—that America was the number one polluter of the earth's atmosphere, and that unless it curbed its carbon emissions, it would plunge the planet into a state beyond resuscitation. Gore was crazy enough to be saying—well before any American politician dared say it, indeed when it was the political kiss of death to do so—that if we want to stop the earth from being murdered, let's compel his country to sign the Kyoto Protocol.

What's crazy for the Bushes, of course, is the sanest thing in the world for the rest of the world. Indeed a completely literal life-and-death agenda for it. One can only hope that what has been a kiss of death for any American politician, not to speak of presidential aspirant, will turn out to be the breath of life for Gore's future—as well as that of the human species. In the end, the American elections of 2008 are of monumental concern not just for the American voter but also for the citizen of the world.

The UN report reaffirms the need for continued US leadership in addressing global climate issues? There's only one way that can be true: With Gore in charge.

Confusing

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

AS I SAT DOWN TO WRITE THIS COLUMN, THE decision of the four members of the Wednesday Club—to run with the opposition or the administration—was still up in the air. But more likely, this group would go with the United Opposition.

It's easy to see Senate President Manuel Villar running under UNO, which is chaired by former President Joseph Estrada. Villar is a pragmatic politician, and he seems to be driven by a consuming desire to bag the presidency in 2010. Right now, he probably believes the opposition will lead him to it. But it's interesting to see how he will fare with another equally ambitious candidate for the top spot in the 2007 Senate race: Loren Legarda, who has her own agenda for 2010.

As for Sen. Francis Pangilinan, the opposition is the only place for him after he cast his lot with Sen. Franklin Drilon last July 2005. I don't anticipate any adjustment problem either for Sen. Ralph Recto in UNO, but I have a problem casting Sen. Joker Arroyo with the UNO crowd. After all, he led the prosecution in the impeachment case against Estrada in 2001.

* * *

This is now the problem that many citizens have: Politicians seem able to just jump in and out of political camps without much difficulty, guided only by what's pragmatic and convenient for them. Most politicians in the administration's Unity Ticket are no better than those in UNO. I can see what President Macapagal-Arroyo wants to do: reconcile all factions. But can't she get opposition recruits with a little more substance? For instance, former Sen. Tito Sotto is best remembered in the Senate for his impeccable sartorial elegance—and little else besides.

* * *

The entire world is agog about global warming and its catastrophic consequences. To me, several episodes in recent weeks drove home the point. Last Jan. 25, Speaker Jose de Venecia invited us to a dinner he was hosting for South Korean Speaker Lim Chae Jung and Korea's ruling Uri Party's foreign relations committee chair, MP Chung-Eui-Yong. They had flown from Moscow to Beijing before catching a PAL flight to Manila. I asked Speaker Lim how this winter was in Moscow, and he said the snow was only beginning to fall when they left the day before. Imagine Moscow without snow in winter! On the other hand, relatives said flowers were in bloom in New York and there was hardly any snow in the dead of winter. Across the continent, vegetables and fruits were being destroyed by frost in mild California. There was hardly any snow in Toronto, while in Vancouver it was snowing. Winter in the western world came very late, and recent reports said that in states around the Great Lakes, schools were closed as temperatures nose-dived to 30 degrees below zero.

* * *

Media reported plunging temperatures in Baguio City and how frost was destroying Benguet's "salad bowl." My husband and I decided to drive up to Baguio over the weekend to savor the cold. Indeed, it was quite chilly there, with the temperature falling to nine degrees in the early morning. Last Sunday, we made a sentimental drive to Mt. Data Hotel, which we visited in 1974. We were pleased to note that where 33 years ago it took five to six hours to get there over awfully rough roads, now it takes less than three hours over cemented roads. From Data, Bontoc is only 45 kms away, and the Cordillera range, with its forests pretty much preserved remains a breathtaking sight as ever.

* * *

Mt. Data Hotel has been turned over by the Philippine Tourism Authority to the local government. It is clean and well-run and charges reasonable rates. Hotel people told us that a week ago, the temperature plunged to one degree below zero, coating cars with frost. But when we visited Data, the sun was bright, so we decided to have a lunch picnic under the pines—something we loved to do in Baguio when the children were growing up. Wrapped in the glorious scent of the pines, with the sun warmly kissing us even though the wind remained nippy, we seemed so remote from the stifling politics of Manila. Try visiting Data some time.

The frost in Atok, Benguet's vegetable bowl, is manageable and the lowlands are in no danger of running out of veggies. What I found very inspiring was seeing the industrious folk there planting vegetables and flowers on terraces carved out of the mountainside and even by the roadside.

* * *

Reminder: Retrouvaille, the Catholic ministry dedicated to helping save troubled marriages, is conducting another healing weekend from Feb. 9 to Feb. 11 at the Mother of Mercy Spiritual Center, SVD Road, Tagaytay City. Retrouvaille asserts there's no better Valentine gift for couples with dimming relationships than spending a Retrouvaille weekend together. Love-healing miracles still happen. Call Fr. Dave Clay 09189020511, or Ruby del Castillo 09189232973, or Nes and Inday Sitaca at 09215739481. All calls are confidential.

* * *

This Sunday, Feb. 11, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, will also be marked with the celebration of the 15th World Day of the Sick. Held in a different continent each year, this year's celebration will be held in Seoul, South Korea, with the theme "The Spiritual and Pastoral Care of Patients with Incurable Diseases." In Manila, the Sovereign Military Hospitaller Order of St. John of Jerusalem of Rhodes and Malta, together with the Archdiocese of Manila, will celebrate it this Saturday, Feb. 10, at the Espiritu Santo Parish Church in Tayuman, Manila. They will bring together a thousand sick and old folks from different hospices, clinics, parishes, outreach centers and hospitals in Metro Manila and nearby provinces. Gaudencio Cardinal Rosales will celebrate Mass with 30 priests in the healing ministry. Lunch will be served courtesy of our ambassador to the Holy See, Nida Vera and Victoria Concepcion. Odelia Gregorio-Arroyo is overall in charge of the affair.

Microsoft's Vista and e-waste

HUMAN FACE

Ma. Ceres P. Doyo

I WANTED TO BE ONE OF THE COUNTLESS gawkers in green or blue attire at last weekend's Microsoft Vista launch at the seaside mall, but when I imagined the number of people there who spoke computerese, I changed my mind. Besides, I was not buying the new program. Not yet. I mean, we'd soon have to have it if there's no other one to choose.

Although I'm no techie, I've been reading up on Vista and what it can do for me. Microsoft's Bill Gates himself said Vista took some five years to perfect, so it must be awesome. But some computer experts say it still would need some fine-tuning once it gets out there and people start using it.

So what does this mean for all of us? Vista ruling our world vista, our cultural and information landscape, the way we do things, think, create and communicate? But what about our "hard copy" vista, that is, our terra firma, the hard ground on which we walk?

Greenpeace has issued a warning on the e-waste, the e-junk, the e-garbage that Vista will generate. Greenpeace doesn't mean the digital junk in your computer files and e-mail; it is referring to the material electronic junk that will pile up on the ground. Because every trying-hard Who's Who in the computer world would want to shuck the old PC for a new computer bundle that comes with Vista plus plus.

Upgrading the old PC is too jurassic for some. Like, why go through the cumbersome upgrade when, for just a few bucks more, you get a whole new bundle?

But wait. Bill Gates and Microsoft didn't tell us what to do with the old, where to throw them.

I share Greenpeace's concern that Vista, Microsoft's newest operating system, could trigger a deluge of e-waste in developing countries. With Vista, Greenpeace says, more companies and individuals may feel the need to replace their computers sooner as these might become incompatible with the new OS. The result, Greenpeace warns, would be "massive volumes of computer scrap in dirty re-cycling yards and dumpsites in the Philippines, Thailand and other Asian countries where most of the world's e-waste dumps are located."

Some months ago, I watched a TV documentary on a remote place in China that used to be a rustic, rural destination. Now it is the destination of dead computers, a veritable junkyard of toxic and harmful electronic innards and skeletons. It draws thousands of scavengers who salvage parts that could still be used or recycled. It was a shocking sight, a terrible site, a cemetery.

Recycling is good, but should it be this way?

"With Vista," Greenpeace's Beau Banconguis warns, "Microsoft could effectively hasten the obsolescence of half of the world's PCs, especially in the absence of fully functioning global take-back systems for PCs." Banconguis is with Greenpeace Asia's campaign against toxic waste. She adds that companies will feel the need to upgrade their PCs and when they do, the world is not prepared for the massive e-waste the upgrade will generate.

I myself did try to run a free on-line test on my PC to see if it was Vista-ready. I was told I needed something to get the test done. I was just testing and I was already being told by this on-line program that there was some tweaking to do. Forget it, I said. Was I being told that tweaking and upgrading are hard to do, that I should junk my old hard/software and go get a new package?

Greenpeace says that current environmental policies of computer companies are not enough to provide an effective solution to the growing mountains of toxic electronic waste from computer components. Microsoft, Greenpeace emphasizes, should have factored in these consequences and should have laid out mitigating measures to minimize the problem of obsolescence, before it started introducing new innovations. Innovation should not translate into more pollution, Banconguis adds.

Multi-billionaire Gates was beaming in snowy Davos where the world's Who's Who in economics were recently gathered, where the prefix "eco-" also became the "eco-" of ecology, what with global warming and climate change high on the agenda of the world's economic movers. Did he say anything about e-waste?

Greenpeace cites a study, conducted by SoftChoice Corporation, that states that 50 percent of the current breed of PCs are "below Window's Vista's basic system requirements," while 94 percent are not equipped to run on Window's Vista Premium edition."

Greenpeace has been campaigning so that PC and mobile phones manufacturers would phase out toxic substances from their products and place take-back mechanisms for their products when they reach the end of their lives. They should design their products in a way that they could be easily upgraded, disassembled and recycled.

When I wrote in this column about an NGO that takes e-waste for recycling, not a few wrote to ask where and how. (Contact Philippines Business for the Environment.) Some years ago I delivered a car trunk full of dead electronic gadgets to a vocational school for its students to study and make something of.

The useful lives of electronic equipment could be longer if only manufacturers would not plan their obsolescence. Planned obsolescence is an immoral marketing strategy. The digital camera that I bought in 2001 is now obsolete. Its new battery pack and memory card that I recently bought (an upgrade that I regret) are no longer compatible with the latest hi-resolution model (which is half the price of my 2001 camera).

We are in a throw-away world and we are the worse for it. The last time I tasted the real meaning of the word "vista" was when I was meditating on these lines from Francis Thompson: "Up vista-ed hopes I sped;/ and shot, precipitated/ Adown Titanic glooms of chasmed fears..."

Send feedback to cerespd@info.com.ph

Tribute to Adel

THE LONG VIEW

Manuel L. Quezon III

NO MUSLIM FIGURES IN EITHER OF THE TWO main senatorial slates. I am pegging the administration line-up as follows: Gilbert Teodoro, Tessie Aquino Oreta, Vicente Sotto III, Richard Gomez, Edu Manzano, Miguel Zubiri, Mike Defensor, Edgardo Angara, Joker Arroyo, Rafael Recto Jr., Gregorio Honasan and Prospero Pichay. The opposition slate seems likely to be composed of: Loren Legarda, JV Ejercito, John Osmeña, Francis Escudero, Benigno Aquino III, Francisco Pangilinan, Alan Peter Cayetano, Manuel Villar Jr., Aquilino Pimentel III, Panfilo Lacson, Sonia Roco and Antonio Trillanes IV. As you can see, in neither list does a Muslim appear. As recently as 2004, the major slates all featured Muslim candidates.

Regardless of whether Filipino Muslims have ever had enough numbers—or a Muslim vote—to elect one of their own, national slates have tended to make a point of including a Muslim. This was part of the larger strategy of balancing regional interests in national representation. Another example would be the tradition, which held out from 1935 to 1986, of geographically-balanced presidential and vice-presidential tandems. The Marcos-Tolentino and Aquino-Laurel tickets were the first to break with this tradition. As with all unwritten rules, once broken, they're impossible to restore. That the number voters in Luzon equals those of the Visayas and Mindanao combined is a political reality that trumps tradition.

The Senate elected in 1941 had a distinguished Muslim, Aluyao Alonto; the one elected in 1946 had two: Alonto and Salipada Pendatun. The Second Congress had no Muslim senator, but Domocao Alonto was elected to the Senate in 1955 to serve in the Third and Fourth. There was no Muslim senator in the Fifth and Sixth, but the Seventh (last pre-martial law legislature) had Mamintal Tamano. The Eighth Congress' Senate had two: Santanina Rasul and Mamintal Tamano; the Ninth had Rasul; the 10th, 11th, 12th and 13th Congresses—or a total of 12 years—mark the longest period in our history that we haven't had a Muslim senator. (From 1916-1935, the Senate always had one, appointed by the governor general.) Previously, the longest stretch was six years. This is one reason I'm personally in favor of a regional approach to electing senators in the future.

Unsought as he is, let me pay tribute to Adel Abbas Tamano, who I think would make a splendid senator—and might be one, still, at some future time.

Both the administration and the opposition were quite interested in getting Tamano to run. He was approached by leaders of administration-allied parties, as well as by the leaders of the opposition; though from what I can recall, his name was first floated by the non-traditional political groups, such as the Black and White Movement, to which I belong.

I understand the pressure became quite intense, which is as much a tribute to his personal qualities as it is to the appreciation, by both sides, of the need for a Muslim candidate. In the end, he declined the offers. It is sad that conflicting political pressures have resulted in his opting out. But at a time when our national politics shows no sign of improvement, it's a kind of victory that one potential candidate has set aside his political prospects to maintain his personal principles.

I'd like to reproduce a comment Tamano left on my blog, addressed to another reader who was supportive of his running for the Senate.

This is part of what Tamano wrote on Jan. 30: "I am seriously concerned by the fact that there aren't other Muslim leaders who are being considered as possible senatorial candidates ...

"On the issue of the need for a Muslim senatorial candidate, allow me to say this—one of the preconditions for this nation's full development is a stable and lasting peace in Mindanao. This cannot happen unless we have Moro representatives in the highest sectors of government, articulating Muslim concerns and interests. This point is not a self-serving endorsement—there are many qualified Muslims—but rather an objective assessment of the current failure of the peace process in Mindanao and the obvious marginalization of Moros in higher-level policy-making.

"Finally, my hope is that issues that affect Muslim Filipinos will also be an integral part of the discourse in choosing our country's future leaders."

I share Tamano's concern that he is the only Muslim who has been considered for the Senate at this time. Because of their entrepreneurship which has made them increasingly visible (and thus, less alien and less subject to suspicion and misunderstanding), Muslims figure in our daily lives. Given this reality, the idea that a Muslim Filipino vote—and thus, constituency—should break out of the confines of geography should be gathering steam. Which is why, I believe Tamano, though Manila-based, to be as good a representative for Muslims as anyone.

It may be timely to propose that Muslim Filipinos consider three things: that the short list of their potential leaders is scandalously short; that they have a potential clout that transcends geography and even ethnicity, as there are an increasing number of Muslim converts without traditional ties of blood or ethnicity; that at no time since 1916 (when the Senate was established) have they been so weakly represented nationally.

It bothers me that even if I wanted to vote for a Muslim for the Senate, and I always have made a point of voting for a Muslim national candidate ever since I started to vote, this year, I have no choice. Muslim Mindanao and the broader Muslim Filipino community, has been reduced to a place for harvesting votes, but not for actual representation.

Fishing in Miagao

YOUNG BLOOD

Florence Yul N. Saquian

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—Ed.

THE SMELL OF TANGUIGUE, DALUPANE AND *HASA-HASA* still fills the air. The orange-red brilliance of the setting sun still stains the blue cloudless sky as the ebbing tide brushes silently upon the shore. The green seaweeds, the slimy jellyfish and the scattered piles of gravel that used to border the bare landscapes are gone, however. Farther away, small boats dot the horizon like pimples on face of the ocean.

I spent a good dozen years of my life here on this seashore—from the time I was able to walk until I finished grade school. I did my first real living and real thinking here.

And I think of it now. Just as a reader of a long novel browses through its pages to find a forgotten part of the plot and has a flash of recognition over old scenes, dialogues and characters who have gone out of the narrative but whose personalities and substance once filled pages upon pages, I turn back to old chapters of my life. When was it or where was it, I ask, that I first began to marvel at the vastness of the earth, the immensity of the universe, the depth of the oceans? When did I begin to ponder the mystery of life and death? It has indeed been a long time.

I was born in Manila, where the asphalt streets were never empty of speeding cars and jeepneys, even at night, and of people walking, their footsteps echoing on the sidewalks. But here on the seashore of Miagao, another world existed. In the morning, it was the voices of the fisherfolk hauling net from the sea that broke my sleep. Even before I was awake, I could smell the damp salty morning air. Flocks of birds perched on coconut trees or set out across the sky to welcome the new day. As I walked on the coarse sandy beach with Lola, I would see my grandpa arriving on his small *baroto* with his catch of *aloy, sapsap, lapu-lapu,* or *liwit*.

The barren landscape was my playground. On evenings when the sky was clear and moon was bright, I would play *patintero* with children in the neighborhood. The days were fun-filled. When I got tired of swimming from morning till noon, I would climb coconut trees and collect the young fruits. I would also hunt for beetles that fed on the buds at the apex of the tree, tie strings around their legs, and swirl them to dizziness. Then, I would place the bugs on red-hot coal and watch them turn into ashes. I would also lay poles between two trees and invent new monkey swings that no one else could do. But every time I did that, I would end up breaking an arm.

The first time Lolo brought me with him out to sea I was 10 years old. We left in the afternoon, and by the time darkness creeped in we were in the middle of nowhere. The night chill was biting. Flickering kerosene lamps from other boats in the distance assured us that we had company. The water was silent, deep and dark as it glistened in the lamplight. My grandpa had set out his hooks earlier and we waited for some fish to take the bait.

Lolo caught a big *tanguigue* and held it beside the boat, half-submerged in the water. I watched joyfully as he showed it to me. It hung still, heavy and homely. It had silvery skin like an old silver spoon, stained with age. Seaweeds hung from its fins. Its gills breathed crimson blood. Its belly swelled with millions of eggs. Its eyes were large, shallow and yellow.

Lolo stared at the fish for a long while. As I held the lamp closer to the creature, the light diffracted a bright array of colors. A rainbow of colors! I was fascinated because without the light, the skin shone silvery.

Without saying a word, Lolo removed the hook gently from its jaw and let the fish go.

From that day on, my grandpa brought me with him every weekend. A love grew in me for the rhythm of nature, for the restlessness of the tides, for the biting chill of the sea breeze, for the brilliant stains of the setting sun across the horizon, for the nights of bountiful catches, and for the days of drought.

But my mind wandered beyond this world. I discovered that the *baroto* would not capsize though the earth was round for there was a strong force beneath that held it in place. I knew the constellations, the Dipper and the Bear. I looked for the belt of Orion, the twin stars of Misar and Alcar, and realized that the ancients named these stars thousand of years before me.

Even in my childish ignorance, I felt conscious of man's long, varied, but limited time on earth. I knew this deep and wide ocean existed beneath the star-filled sky for ages before the forefathers of my grandpa settled on this beach. I thought of their generation who had fished, played and swam on this beach. I felt worshipful of the earth, of the sea and of the seashore itself.

I left the seashore when I went back to the city for my high school education. We never had a chance to go back during vacations. Although I wrote my grandparents often, I never saw them face-to-face again.

The death of Lolo took us back to Miagao. Going back to places I once relished (and perhaps always will) made me feel sentimental. The seashore was different now. The sea has advanced to the beach, hardly leaving space for children to play *patintero* at night. The coconut trees have been replaced by more nipa huts, and the wide bare landscape once filled with jellyfish, seaweeds and gravel was now littered with charred logs, banana stalks, a dead dog, feces and bamboo sticks. Lola sold the *baroto* to a relative so she could have some money for grandfather's funeral.

The night after his burial, I stayed on the beach and felt once again the biting chill that once seeped through my pores. A few stars came out, and a yellow moon rose. I listened to the restless waves splashing on the sand, leaving behind seaweeds, jellyfish and the memories I had with Lolo. Farther away, the lamplights of *barotos* flickered like stars, reminding me of a lamplight that created a rainbow and brought life back to a *tanguigue*.

Florence Yul N. Saquian, 29, is chief resident of the ENT department at the Philippine General Hospital.

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Taxing consumers for pilfered power

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER LETTERS

THIS IS A REACTION TO JENIFER Aquino-Xaviar's letter titled "Is ERC [Energy Regulatory Commission] protecting customers?" (INQUIRER, 2/2/07) The answer is "No."

Under the present setups and practices, power utilities don't suffer any loss from pilfered electricity; and their shareholders are assured of higher dividends—while the customers get screwed blue.

How does ERC leave the honest consumers, as Aquino-Xavier calls us, unprotected, at the mercy of power utilities.

1. By not forcing the utilities to file charges against those stealing electricity. This means no additional expenses and more profits for the utilities, and so higher dividends for the shareholders.

For example, in our subdivision, many of us have been calling Meralco, using the hotline listed on the monthly bill, to complain about the theft of electricity, but never has there been any action taken against the pilferers. In just about every case, no one from Meralco has even bothered to show up to investigate. There is simply no incentive on the part of Meralco to stop the theft. After all, it can just pass on the "losses" to the "honest consumers."

And we are not talking here of only one bulb in an informal settler's hut; we are talking here of a manufacturing operation which uses a grinder, arc welder and metal chopping saw, all of which, needless to say, consume large amounts of electricity.

2. To add insult to injury, consumers are being charged the Value Added Tax for the "System Loss Charge." In other words, consumers are taxed on something they never even used.

We, the consumers, should call Meralco's attention to these unfair charges. And it's time we took to task our so-called senators and congressmen and government officials who allowed these highly questionable, clearly unfair charges to be imposed on us.

It is hard enough for most families today to make ends meet; but to be made to pay for electricity illegally used by others and then be slapped with a tax for the cost of the electricity they have stolen—this is tantamount to bullying and oppressing honest electricity consumers.

—LARRY WILSON, 061 Kamagong St., St. Joseph Subd., Cainta, Rizal

Unlike a blue-blooded Atenean

FIRST GENTLEMAN MIGUEL ARROYO INvoked the name of Ateneo during his appearance at the hearing of the House Committee on Ethics last Jan. 23. Refusing to answer Pateros Rep. Alan Peter Cayetano's allegations against him, Arroyo instead filed a complaint before the ethics committee, to demand the expulsion of the congressman from the House of Representatives.

"Ateneo de Manila seeks to preserve, extend and communicate truth and apply it to human development," so says the Vision/Mission Statement of the Ateneo de Manila University. Clearly, Mike Arroyo does not share this mission and vision. He, therefore, does not have the moral ascendancy to drag the name of Ateneo to his personal campaign to crush those who dare question his actions as a public figure. He does not manifest the basic principles of honesty, integrity and all the values an Atenean is expected to possess.

Representative Cayetano is not the first to feel the wrath of the First Gentleman. In 2006, Arroyo filed several multimillion libel cases against journalists, editors whose only fault was to report matters of public interest. In the end, the biggest victims of Arroyo's abuse of power are the Filipino people who are left with unanswered questions regarding the corruption cases that are said to be linked to him.

We are proud to be Ateneans. We decry the use of the name of our alma mater by a person who refuses to be transparent in matters of public interest. We always say that an Atenean must be a man for others. Miguel Arroyo, clearly, is not.

—HYRA DELA CRUZ, spokesperson, Kabataan Partylist-Ateneo de Manila University Chapter, c/o 10C Speaker Perez St., Barangay Lourdes, Quezon City

Only asking to listen to the sound of silence

THIS IS IN RESPONSE TO CONRADO de Quiros' column titled "Conspirator." (INQUIRER, 1/30/07) I am one-half of the couple he was alluding to—the couple who, according to him, chose not to "bathe in the waters of the musical and magical, glorious and heavenly sounds" that Conspiracy Café plays nightly.

We may seem ignorant in his esteemed opinion (a question that can be debated some other time), but I believe that music appreciation is relative.

It seems De Quiros failed to do his research. We were not the only ones who complained about the noise or "music" (to De Quiros) from Conspiracy. Other residents in our neighborhood also submitted a petition to the Business Permit Office of Quezon City Hall. Had De Quiros bothered to check the records of the case, he would have known about this.

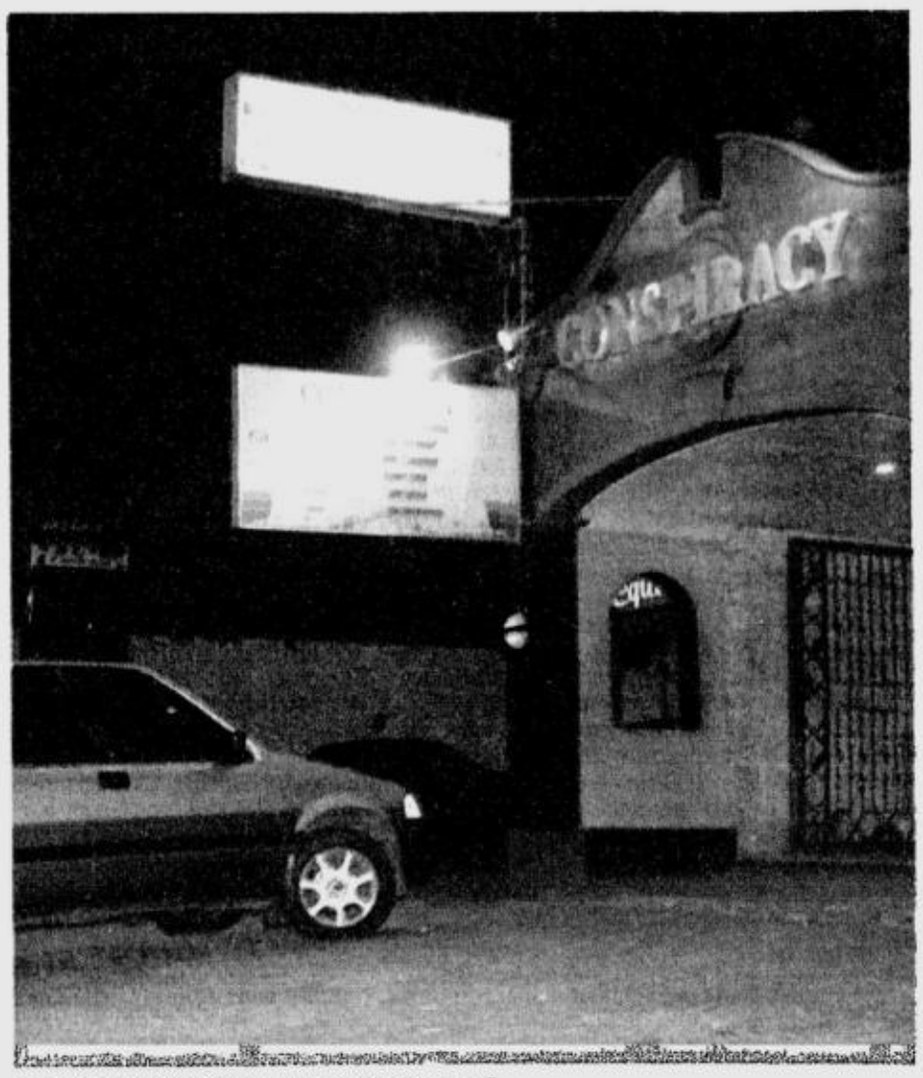
Another point: the loudspeakers in the garden were removed not in consideration of the patrons who wanted to hang out in the garden but because residents of a house next-door had complained about the noise. To stress their point, they installed huge speakers and had them face Conspiracy; they played loud music whenever the café played loud music.

As to the insinuation that we "apparently have some connections with City Hall," this I deny: as a matter of fact, it took more than three years of complaining, petitioning and begging before City Hall finally implemented the findings and recommendations made by its employees after several inspections. But the closure order which took three years to implement was lifted after 24 hours only. This begs the question: Who's the one with connections?

De Quiros must be wondering why I am taking the time to answer him, as I am wondering why he spent so much space on us. We are insignificant people. We are not celebrities like the owners of Conspiracy. We are merely ordinary people living ordinary lives. We work in the day, so we rest at night. We are not asking for anything extraordinary. All we are asking for is that the café be soundproofed. We don't care what music they play. It can be acoustic, jazz, ethnic or even Pinoy alternative, which they played at maximum level until 2 a.m. last Jan. 22. All we care about and ask for is peace and silence. We can appreciate our music at our own time.

As for his gratitude for the publicity, he's welcome. Now he's sure to get his two share's worth.

—NELLY LEOFANDO, tdleofando@yahoo.com



CONSPIRACY Café: soothing or boisterous?

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Can't we have a kinder system for getting our GSIS e-Card Plus?

WHILE IT IS TRUE THAT "The new e-Card Plus [of the Government Service Insurance System] will save pensioners valuable time and money" when they encash their pensions, the GSIS should also think of other ways to save pensioners from the cumbersome processes they have to undergo to get the eCard.

In a letter dated Dec. 29, 1998 (I retired effective Jan. 1, 1999), the GSIS advised me to "[p]lease inform the chief, Payment Administration Division, of your address three months before March 21, 2007 (my 60th birthday)." Following the instruction, I personally went to the GSIS on Jan. 9, 2007. It was then that I was advised to follow up the status of my application for pension, on Apr. 15, 2007. After that, I have to go back to apply/enrol for the eCard.

Republic Act 8291 states that we can avail of pension benefit at age 60. This means I am supposed to be entitled to a pension, effective March 21, 2007, my 60th birthday.

Yes, I understand that a process has to be followed. However, the system can be improved and made more credible if it focuses a little more on serving those who have helped the GSIS grow into what it is now.

Why require me to go back to apply for the eCard? Why did the GSIS not require me to apply for the card when I went there on Jan. 9? I'm luckier because I'm still physically able, but I live in Cainta, Rizal, which is very far from Pasay. I believe the GSIS is already fully automated. Why not have this transaction in the GSIS Antipolo branch?

I pity my fellow retirees who are blind or who are on wheelchairs or on crutches, or with hearing aids, especially those who have to take public transportation from their provinces to go to the GSIS main office.

Is this what we get for giving more than half of our lives in the service of the government? I can assure the public that I didn't enrich myself in office. I look at my pension as a much-awaited reward in recognition of my 30 years of government service. I will appreciate it if the GSIS can be more helpful to and accommodating with the retirees and would-be retirees like me.

—ANUNCIACION S. DONATO, 022 11th Street, Youngstown Village, Cainta, Rizal

Kudos to RP consulate in Los Angeles

A FEW DAYS AGO, I FILED my application for dual citizenship at the Philippine Consulate in Los Angeles, California, not without a few worries about a lengthy, drawn-out process that would require more documents, more trips—maybe, even having to fork out extra money to a "fixer."

Imagine my pleasant surprise to discover that the entire process—getting and filling out the forms, attaching the photos and required documents, processing, paying the $50 fee—took only a little over an hour. After which, minutes later, our group of six was called into a room to take our oath and receive our completed documents (with photocopies, to boot!). Special thanks go to Consular Officer Eric Sierra who was efficient, patient, helpful and cheerful throughout.

To those Fil-Ams who dread the thought of having to go through the process of acquiring dual citizenship at any of our consulates in the United States, I say, "No sweat. It's a piece of cake!"

—PERLA LIMBAGA MANAPOL, firlatot@yahoo.com

Bernas missed RA 7157 provision on age limit

THE COLUMN OF FR. JOAquin Bernas, a guru in constitutional law, on the appointment of former Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. as ambassador to the United Nations (INQUIRER, 22/1/06), was very enlightening. But there is one legal issue that the good Father Bernas missed: that the appointment to an ambassadorial post (whether that appointment is political or career) of somebody who has reached the ripe age of 70 years, like Davide, is contrary to law.

Republic Act 7157 (on foreign service) contains some statutory prohibitions: a career ambassador is retired "mandatorily and automatically" upon reaching the age of 65 years (Sec. 33); assignment to a post is for a non-extendible period of six years (Sec. 37); no two successive tours of duty are permissible; an ambassador, political or career, is prohibited from staying in the service after he reaches the age of 70 years (Sec. 23). The debates in the enactment of this law clearly explained the reasons for these proscriptions.

Those who argue against these prohibitions cite the power of the President, under the Constitution, to appoint "ambassadors, other public ministers and consuls." While the President, under this provision, may appoint anybody, with or without qualifications, as envoy, the President has to observe, obey and respect the law—until or unless the law is declared by the Supreme Court unconstitutional. After all, the President has the duty to implement and execute the law; otherwise, she violates the constitution.

They also point out that the Supreme Court allegedly decided or upheld this constitutional power regardless of the law. We ask them to take a second look at jurisprudence. Not even the Santos vs Macaraeg (208 SCRA 74) or Astroquillo et al. vs Manglapus (190 SCRA 280) sustain this view. In the Santos case, for instance, the Solicitor General referred to some US cases such as Curtiss-Wright, Belmont, Pink, in defending the legal recalls to the home office of some political ambassadors. But these US cases deal with the "treaty-making power" of the US president. While extensive, such power definitely does not include presidential prerogative to violate or disregard local or statutory laws.

Indeed the peremptory norm in our democratic legal system is that no one—not even the President, much less the secretary of foreign affairs—is above the law. According to the Supreme Court, the "bedrock of our democracy is the rule of law," a doctrine reiterated in the Davide impeachment case.

—NELSON D. LAVIÑA, ambassador (ret.), nlavina2@fastmail.fm

Politics of survival may split Wednesday Group

From page A1

mer Senators Vicente Sotto III and Tessie Aquino-Oreta, Representatives Prospero Pichay Jr. and Juan Miguel Zubiri, Presidential Chief of Staff Michael Defensor and Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Before De Venecia announced the Team Unity's lineup, Pangilinan and Recto were toying with the idea of running as "independent candidates" for the May 14 elections, the source said.

Another source said Recto could also opt to join the administration ticket.

"So it's split," one of the INQUIRER sources said.

Binay is 'sure'

But UNO president and Makati City Mayor Jejomar Binay said yesterday that on a scale of 1 to 10, the chances of the Wednesday Group joining the opposition ticket are "seven to nine."

"I'm that confident," he said of the inclination of Villar, Arroyo, Recto and Pangilinan to align themselves with the opposition in the May elections.

UNO will announce the final lineup of its senatorial bets "if not (today), by Friday," Binay said on the sidelines of the 25th anniversary celebration of Partido Demokratiko Pilipino–Lakas ng Bayan (PDP-Laban) yesterday.

Social group

Villar acknowledged that the idea of any member of the Wednesday Group running as an independent candidate for the May 14 senatorial elections was possible, but said they could still get together even during campaign sorties.

"Why not? A lot of the candidates are running as independent. It's possible," he said when asked about the possibility of some members of the group running as independent candidates.

"Remember that we will not go separately. We will go separately, if ever just politically, not as a group. This is a social group; not a political group. *Barkadahan (gang)*," said Villar, who had confirmed he would run under either the United Opposition (UNO) or a third or middle force.

He said the group would still get together. "We're still friends regardless of our political affiliation."

Not sure

Asked if he could bring his three colleagues to the UNO, Villar said: "I'm not sure."

The group had insisted that it would announce its plans either today or tomorrow after the Senate wrapped up its legislative agenda and adjourned for the elections.

"We want to take a fresh look at everything," Villar said in the interview.

Three options

He said nothing was final yet.

"We have three options: join the administration or opposition or run as independent. Our best option is the third. Maybe Kiko (Pangilinan) and I can run as independent," Recto said on his way to a bicameral committee hearing Tuesday night.

Kinks emerged in the talks between the UNO and the Wednesday Group for a possible coalition over the weekend when Pangilinan disclosed that the UNO had issued an ultimatum to the group on its desire to join the group, with a "take it or leave it stance."

Differences

UNO leaders had announced its first eight candidates last week, but left out Villar, Pangilinan, Recto and Arroyo. They had been quick to assure that the four remaining slots were reserved for them.

Sen. Franklin Drilon, president of a Liberal Party (LP) faction that initially tried to coalesce with Villar's Nacionalista Party (NP), indicated he would not be surprised if some of the incumbent senators would run as an independent.

"That was the concept from the very start of the coalition. They talked about it," he said in an interview.

The proposed slate composed of incumbent senators, mainly members of the LP and NP, fell through because of the political differences between Senators Panfilo Lacson and Edgardo Angara, who had a falling-out in the run-up to the May 2004 presidential election.

"We tried to bring together the incumbents but it didn't work out because of the conflict of the members," he said.

Pulse Asia survey

Lacson maintained that the four senators joining the UNO-led coalition slate was a sure thing, especially in light of the results of a Pulse Asia survey showing most of the incumbent senators are in the Top 10.

"I don't see how the four of them will go separate ways, especially now that Joker has been encouraged by the survey results. I showed him the results; he was so happy about it," he told reporters.

Lacson said this was a banner year for the opposition. "I hope my colleagues in the Wednesday Group realize that it won't do them any good if they join the administration."

Tactical move

Villar's joining UNO appears to be tactical in nature.

This would firm up the support of the allies of ousted President Joseph Estrada when Villar seeks the Senate presidency anew at the start of the 14th Congress in July in preparation for the 2010 presidential election, observers noted.

Villar, a real estate magnate, is seen as a contender for the presidential elections in three years.

Arroyo and Recto, who ran under the administration coalition in 2001, could opt to join the administration, which was eyeing them for its ticket anyway, the source said.

"They won under the administration. They should be joining the administration. Logic dictates that they should be joining the administration," Pichay said in an interview at the Senate.

More than proxy war

Recto, however, sees the coming elections as more than a "proxy war" between President Macapagal-Arroyo and Estrada, and hence, he could run as an independent with Pangilinan, who is perceived as not completely acceptable to both the opposition and administration camps, the source said.

"Kiko is going in that direction (running independent)," another INQUIRER source said.

Pangilinan was famous for his role as "Mr. Noted," the co-presiding officer, who simply noted objections of the opposition during the canvassing of the results of the 2004 presidential election.

Pangilinan of the LP echoed Recto's statement that individually or as a group, they were weighing their options of joining the opposition or administration or running as independent candidates.

"We are now reevaluating our respective positions individually in light of the development that this original concept of all the incumbent reelectionists coming together under one ticket is no longer possible," he said in an interview.

Asked if he was running as an independent candidate, he tersely said: "That's a distinct possibility." *With a report from Michael Lim Ubac*

Outside looking in . . .

From page A1

According to the information for murder against Continente and Itaas, they were members of the communist New People's Army and that they were on a mission to kill Rowe.

Efforts for their release as political prisoners in connection with the Philippine government's peace talks with the Left all failed, believed due to US pressure on the Aquino administration and succeeding administrations to have them remain behind bars.

In 1998, the Supreme Court ruled that Itaas was the lone principal in the killing of Rowe, and that Continente was a mere conspirator.

Continente's jail sentence was downgraded to 17 years and, because of good conduct, further reduced by another year.

Sixteen years after he was clapped in jail, he was released. He continues to maintain his innocence.

Political prisoners

Now living in Quezon City with his wife Imelda and their 8-year-old son Jose Luis, Continente said that as a member of Selda, he had made the rounds of penitentiaries and jails nationwide to touch base with political prisoners and those wrongfully accused or convicted.

"We help political prisoners and victims of human rights abuses under the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos," he said of his advocacy. "We are also part of calls to end the series of extrajudicial killings under the administration of President Macapagal-Arroyo, and for her to resign."

Asked if he met with members of the Communist Party of the Philippines after his release, Continente said: "I was never part of the armed struggle.

"I've always said that I was never part of the NPA, and that we were wrongfully convicted."

Continente said he had been savoring his freedom and the "chance to get my family back on track."

But is he not afraid to lose that freedom because of his continued activism and the unabated killing of activists like himself?

"One should not fear serving the people" was his reply.

Qualified for parole

Continente said that after more than 17 years in prison, Itaas was now qualified for parole.

"But because of US pressure on the government, he will not be given that reprieve," Continente said.

Itaas, 42, has conceded that the NPA was behind the murder of Rowe. But he claims that he was not personally involved.

"I have always said I had no personal involvement in that action undertaken by the movement," Itaas told Agence France Presse in an interview at the New Bilibid Prison.

The wire agency reported that after he was arrested shortly after the murder, Itaas signed a confession that was later used to convict him, along with the testimony of a bystander who told the court that she saw him firing an automatic rifle into Rowe's car.

Itaas later disowned the confession, alleging that it was extracted by police through torture. But his appeal was turned down in 2001.

According to the wire agency's report, Itaas dropped out of high school at 14 to join the NPA in Davao, and that he rose through the ranks to become an important commander of the CPP's armed wing.

He was 24 when he was arrested in Davao shortly after the Rowe murder.

And now he frets that the revolution he fought so hard for is passing him by, AFP said.

The issues remain

Itaas and 23 other considered political prisoners bunk together in a "brigade" or a row of cots measuring 14 by 12 meters.

So what does he think of the revolution now?

"History will be the judge," he told AFP. "The issues that fire up revolution, such as poverty and inequality, remain."

But he said he feared that he would no longer be there to influence the outcome of the armed struggle even if he walked free now.

Conjugal visits by his wife have allowed them to have three children, now aged between 2 and 11 years old.

"For me, my three children come first. After that I do not know," he said.

Itaas said a "change of government" remained his most optimistic chance of winning release.

But even then, the US government may still exert pressure on its loyal ally against releasing him on parole, he said.

Highest ranking

A counter-insurgency specialist, Rowe's assassination in Quezon City on April 21, 1989, rocked the administration of then President Corazon Aquino and the US authorities in Manila.

Sitting on the back seat of his unprotected chauffeur-driven limousine, Rowe was oblivious to the threat.

As his car slowed in traffic, another pulled up alongside and his murderers opened fire with an M-16 assault rifle and a .45-cal. hand gun, killing him instantly.

Rowe, a graduate of West Point military academy, joined the US Army's elite Green Beret special forces and went to Vietnam in the early 1960s.

Captured by the Vietcong and tortured repeatedly, he was held in a bamboo cage for five years before he managed to escape.

In 1985, Rowe was put in charge of the Special Warfare Training Battalion in Fort Bragg before being posted to Manila.

He served as chief of the Army division of the Joint US Military Advisory Group providing counter-insurgency training for the Philippine military.

'Soldier's soldier'

Rowe worked closely with the US Central Intelligence Agency and was involved in a program to penetrate the CPP and the NPA, which were then undergoing a massive ideological upheaval that resulted in bloody purges.

Not long before he was murdered, Rowe warned Washington that the communists were planning a series of attacks on high-profile figures and that he was on the list.

But despite the threats, he insisted on taking care of himself and shunned the idea of having armed escorts.

As one of his friends put it after his death: "Rowe was a soldier's soldier." *With an AFP report*

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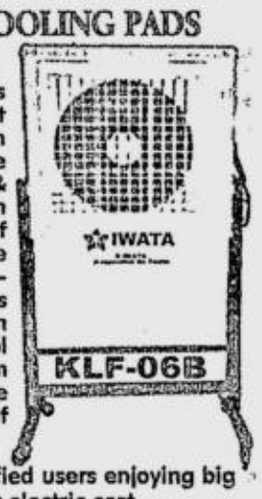

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CITIZENS ASSEMBLY FOR CREDIBLE MAY 2007 ELECTIONS

OPEN LETTER

February 2, 2007

Mrs. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo
President
Republic of the Philippines

Dear Mrs. Arroyo,

We, the participants of the **Citizens Assembly for a Credible May 2007 Elections** strongly express our full agreement with our bishops in their declaration that the ***"coming elections in May 2007 are especially important."*** We further agree with them that ***"as a nation, we cannot afford yet another controversial electoral exercise"*** like the 2004 Presidential Elections. We support their admonition that ***"therefore, this time, we are determined that we come together once more and organize ourselves more effectively than we have done in the past to make this year's elections credible – and as free of violence as possible."*** (CBCP Letter, 28 January 2007)

Pursuant to your manifestations made in response to this CBCP Letter that the nation should have clean and credible election in May – **we ask that you name as one of the members of the COMELEC a nominee of proven integrity and probity; one acceptable and trusted even to the political opposition. This nominee must be directly charged with responsibility of the Commission's Operations and Personnel.**

It is good to remind you that this was done in the 1986 elections when then President Ferdinand E. Marcos named former Congressman Ramon Felipe as one of the Commissioners of the poll body to represent the opposition then.

Such a vital appointment will give substance to your manifestations, and help dispel doubts concerning a fair and free electoral contest in May. **We ask that you consider Sixto Brillantes, Leila de Lima, Atty. Louie Sison and Atty. Nasser Marohomsalic, as nominees for the position of Commissioners. The first two are eminent long-time practitioners in the field of elections and the other two are law practitioners and have held key positions in the government.**

We will also ask the COMELEC that the accreditation of the PPCRV as its citizens arm include the right and duty to conduct a parallel count of the votes cast in the elections.

Permit us to point out that absolutely nothing substantial has been done since the election of 2004 to erase the fears that 2007 will be any different. Indeed, the absence of credible changes makes the repetition of the reprehensible 2004 election a certainty. In fact, in lieu of reforms, we are led to believe that "improvements" have been made on the cheating system to continue to thwart the real will of the people. Only time and meaningful reforms can make us believe otherwise.

Your positive and immediate response on or before February 12, 2007, when the campaign period begins, and not the so-called "Election Summit" may at least make the May 2007 elections credible. Otherwise, these forthcoming elections can be another "controversial electoral exercise that further aggravates social distrust and hopelessness" which the CBCP warned against.

Thank you. We remain.

Teofisto Guingona, Jr. **Atty. Oscar Orbos** **Marietta P. Goco** **Fr. Joe Dizon**

Antonio L. Tinio **Col. Guillermo Cunanan (ret.)** **Corazon Soliman** **John Carlos de los Reyes**

For and In Behalf of Citizens Assembly

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300 right-of-way cases delay SCTEx

By Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—THE SUBIC-CLARK-Tarlac Expressway may (SCTEx) not be finished by November this year as the Bases Conversion and Development Authority has yet to settle at least 300 pending land cases and right-of-way (ROW) claims.

The prospect of delay was raised by an engineer working for one of the contractors of the flagship project.

The engineer asked not be named, saying he was not in an official position to disclose developments in the P21-billion project funded by a loan from Japan. The SCTEx is one of the government's key projects in the Arroyo administration's Luzon Urban Beltway super region.

Robert Gervacio, chief of the ROW department of the BCDA, the state agency overseeing the project, confirmed on Wednesday that about 250 expropriation cases are pending in courts.

At least 54 ROW-related cases—40 in Pampanga, nine in Bataan and five in Tarlac—have yet to be resolved in courts.

Gervacio said the BCDA has bought more than 1,200 lots along the 94-km, four-lane toll road in the western boundaries of Bataan, Pampanga and Tarlac.

The agency, he said, spent P500 million for ROW acquisition. The government spent for ROW as its counterpart of the loan.

The government resorted to expropriations, or the right of the state to get private lands for public projects, when negotiations with landowners bogged down.

Gervacio said the cases with the Land Bank stemmed either from disputes over land costs, mismatch of land titles and the actual location of lands, lack of documents or non-issuance by the Land Bank of certificate of full payments by beneficiaries of the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture handled the valuation for forest trees and fruit-bearing trees. The Department of Agrarian Reform took care of the valuation of CARP lands.

The BCDA assured landowners of immediate payment once the courts settle the problems.

Narciso Abaya, BCDA president, said landowners "understand that the problem is not with the BCDA."

In a phone interview, he said the BCDA was "trying to meet" the November schedule of opening.

But the engineer said it was a deadline that was impossible to meet considering the right of way problems hounding the BCDA.

Payumo on Wednesday sent a letter to BCDA and Lank Bank officials on behalf of claimants demanding payments in more than two years.

"Their pleas for payment had fallen on deaf ears," he told BCDA officials and directors. The letter was also sent to Land Bank president Gilda Pico.

"I think you have now an obligation to intervene and untangle the legal knot that your respective lawyers found themselves in," Payumo said.

He said the 39 claimants owned lots in Porac and Floridablanca in Pampanga, and Dinalupihan in Bataan.

Payumo said "irate local officials" furnished him the names of the claimants.

"These poor people had also put up fences and barricades from time to time just to catch the attention of the top officials of BCDA but the only response they got was from troops who would promptly pull out the obstructions and warn the lot owners," he said.

Letters meant for villagers found dumped

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—THIS TOWN'S post office found itself in a hot spot when 206 letters it received for delivery were found dumped and abandoned in two *chayote* plantations in Barangay Puguis here.

The police are in custody of the letters and, depending on the investigation to be conducted by the Philippine Postal Corp., charges of infidelity in the custody of documents would be prepared against personnel of the local post office.

The identities of the personnel behind the dumping of the letters were not made known yet.

Local postmaster Dictor Sagandoy said his office will retrieve the letters from the police and will deliver them to the addressees as soon as possible.

The first batch of 140 letters and five magazines were found by farmer Joel Pilayo in his *chayote* field in Sitio Longlong on Feb. 1.

Pilayo turned over the letters and magazines to SPO3 Norbert Daguasi, who was manning the police substation in that area.

The letters were marked mailed in October and November 2006 and were supposed to be delivered to residents of Puguis and Betag villages here.

On Feb. 2, Grace Bilao, 11, Grade 4 pupil of the Longlong Elementary School, saw a plastic bag containing 66 letters in a newly cleared *chayote* field.

Bilao called the attention of her teacher, Eden Pascua, who took the letters to Daguasi.

The letters were mailed in December 2006 and January 2007 and were supposed to be delivered also to Puguis and Betag residents.

Authorities are investigating why the letters were dumped but could not say if any of the mail material contained valuables or money.

The sending of money by mail is prohibited, but corrupt post office personnel were known to pilfer mail for cash that could be inserted in between letters or hidden in parcels.

Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon

A POLICEMAN sorts the letters dumped in Sitio Longlong in Barangay Puguis, La Trinidad, Benguet.
DELMAR CARIÑO/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Army says it's Reds aggravating diseases in Mindanao villages

DAVAO CITY—THE MILITARY has cried foul over reports that its presence aggravated the worsening health situation in remote areas of Mindanao.

Earlier, the Mindanao Project Management Desk of the Council for Health Development (CHD), a non-government organization based here, said a Mindanao-wide study it conducted from July-September last year revealed that the sorry state of health in Mindanao was not only because of the government's neglect but also because of military presence in many parts of the island.

Danny Beltran, CHD project coordinator, said more soldiers with rifles and bullets can actually be seen in far-flung villages of the island than doctors and other health workers with medicines.

Beltran said the study, which was supported by the European Union, also found that health NGOs not accredited by the military were being barred from entering many villages, which compounded the problem on the delivery of health services to the people.

But Maj. Samuel Sagun, public affairs chief of the military's 4th Infantry Division based in Cagayan de Oro City, said they should not be blamed for the state of health of many Mindanao areas.

Blame the Reds

"The military notes that health problems abound in areas where the communists and other armed groups have influence because local health workers are afraid of the menace brought by communist terrorists," Sagun said in a statement sent to the INQUIRER.

Sagun said to ensure that poor villagers would still be able to avail themselves of free health services, the military has sent missions to fill the gaps the government's health service has left empty.

Last year, Sagun said, the military has conducted 18 medical missions in hinterland barangays under the 4th ID's area of responsibility.

These included those in the identified rebel areas of the two Agusan and Surigao provinces.

"The total number of recipients of our medical missions reached 12,633 for medical and 10,622 for dental, probably exceeding any NGO accomplishments within our area of responsibility," Sagun said.

As to allegations the military was barring some NGOs from some villages, Sagun said it was not a policy of the military to implement a "no clearance, no entry" for NGOs.

Realities

"However, the Geneva Conventions authorized the military to disallow NGOs from going inside areas where there is fighting. This is for their own protection. In no other instance will the military bar any NGO from entering any area," Sagun said.

"Health problem is a reality especially in the Third World. There are a lot of economic potentials in Region 10 and the Caraga but the Communist Terrorist Movement (CPP/NPA/NDF), through landmining (sic), killing, illegal logging and extortion, has hindered the progress of these production areas ...," Sagun said in his statement.

Sagun also denied reports the military was behind the death of peasant leader Hermilito Marquiza of Tandag, Surigao del Sur. Hermilito's wife, Marlene, was part of the CHD health team that assessed the health condition of people in 16 provinces of Mindanao.

"He was killed by his neighbor, who is at large and now a subject of police manhunt," said the military officer. *Jeffrey Tupas, Inquirer Mindanao*

Comelec told: Collect fees from bets to pay teachers

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—EDUCATION and election officials here said requiring political candidates to pay fees for filing their certificates of candidacy would help raise funds to give more compensation for teachers who will render election duty in May.

Dr. Benito Tumamao, Department of Education Cordillera director, said the filing fee would be welcomed by teachers in the region particularly those who will be assigned to remote areas.

The Cordillera has 7,769 public elementary and 2,679 public secondary schoolteachers. They are expected to man the region's 5,168 poll precincts in May as board of election inspectors (BEI).

The region has 779,817 registered voters, Commission on Elections records showed.

But lawyer Armando Velasco, Comelec regional director, said the proposal might get entangled with legal questions.

"The idea is laudable but it could court opposition from those who believe that access to politics must be free," he said.

The Omnibus Election Code does not require candidates to pay filing fees. *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*

Laoag City's tricycles becoming icons for tourists

By Cristina Arzadon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

LAOAG CITY—THEY SNAKE through the city's streets with sleek front grills and colorful fog lamps. They even have spoilers fitted with third brake lamps.

But they are not everyone's dream cars. They are Laoag's trendy tricycles.

The city's tricycles have carved an image of their own not because they reign here as the king of the road but because they have become unique in their class.

To pay tribute to Laoag's tricycles as a rising tourist icon, Mayor Michael Fariñas has set aside a day for tricycles to parade around the city during the fiesta celebrations next week.

Laoag's tricycles are fitted with sidecars, which are either "ordinary" (galvanized-type), "special" (stainless-type) or "semi-stainless" (combination of stainless and galvanized type).

The special-type sidecar, with a going price of P20,000 depending on the accessories placed on it, is often called the "luxury trike" inspired by the latest car models with complete trimmings—from front grills, fog lamps and spoilers. The ordinary type fetches P11,000 while the semi-stainless costs P13,000.

Name recall

The windshields bear a riot of stickers—from race car manufacturers, logos of popular stations and food chains to popular quotes. Some appear to have been coined by the drivers themselves, such as "Godly-fear."

And since this is the election season, stickers of aspiring politicians haggle for attention, mostly in less-prominent spaces in the sidecars.

The more conventional stickers announce their family names or the foreign country where their relatives are working as contract workers.

Makers of sidecars, located mostly in nearby San Nicolas town, follow the design of latest car models in the market. Comparable to a sports car, the sporty look has a low sidecar bumper that nearly touches the ground.

Sherlyn Aguinaldo, a sidecar manufacturer in San Nicolas, said her assemblers often use the latest car models as their guides in creating sidecar accessories.

"The design would depend on the client's budget. Those who can afford to shell out more money prefer the luxury type because they can use it even for family trips," Aguinaldo said.

More tricycles

Enrico Aurelio, the city council's secretary, said the number of tricycles in the poblacion area (city proper) has been pegged at 2,800 since 1997 after the council stopped the issuance of new franchises.

Aurelio said there is a continuing clamor to open more franchises to answer the needs of commuters.

Most tricycles here are using the four-stroke engines, which reduce noise and air pollution. Despite the heat, most drivers prefer having no roof on their motorcycles.

Remy Damaso, 42, said a top cover (usually made of synthetic leather) generates more heat because heat is trapped inside the canvass.

"Instead of having a top cover, we make use of ski masks to protect us from the heat," he said.

Appearance matters

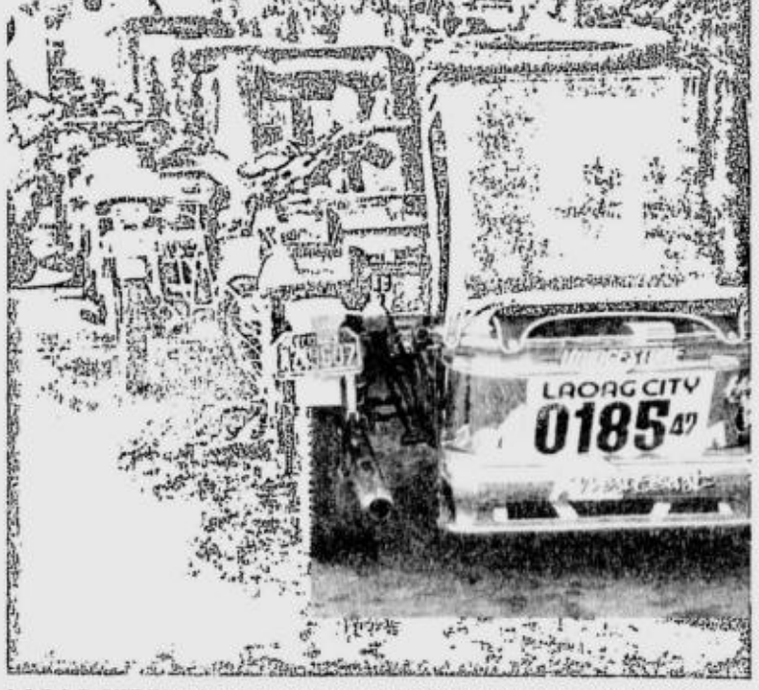
Damaso, however, admits that most drivers do not mount a roof because it will make the tricycle look less sporty. "*Mapukaw diay porma ti tricycle ngamin nukua no adda kalubna* (The shade reduces the form)," he said.

Passengers, however, often complain of cramped space because the two-seat sidecars are smaller than the usual designs. A mini side-seat, big enough to accommodate a child, is seldom used.

A bigger passenger ends up paying double for occupying a two-seat sidecar.

Aurelio said the council does not impose regulatory measures on the sidecar's dimensions as long as the sidecar can accommodate two passengers.

"Unlike Puerto Princesa's roomy tricycles, which are used to load cargo and passengers, our tricycles are intended mostly to transport people," he said.



LAOAG CITY'S tricycles, an icon of the Ilocos Norte capital, wait in line at the city hall.
CRISTINA ARZADON/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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Book unravels brutality of American war

By Juan Escandor Jr.
Naga City

A YEAR AFTER AN AMERICAN soldier fired the first shot that started the Filipino-American War on Feb. 4, 1899, the guns of the invading foreigners resounded in Naga City with brutality as the war of subjugation cleared areas of resistance in Camarines Sur.

Evelyn Caldera Soriano, author of "Bicolano Revolutionaries" published by the National Commission on Culture and the Arts, unraveled the brutal tactics used during the American war as she pieced together letters and memoirs on the historical events at the turn of the 20th century.

The documents, several of them she traced to Europe, belonged to her two granduncles, brothers Tomas and Ludovico Arejola, who were leaders of the resistance movement in Camarines Sur.

Tomas was a member of the propaganda movement in Madrid, Spain, moving in the circle of Dr. Jose Rizal and the Luna brothers. He maintained correspondence with his friend, Austrian ethnologist Ferdinand Blumentritt.

Ludovico was a military officer of the revolutionary government under Gen. Emilio Aguinaldo, appointed Coronel de la Milicia Territorial and tasked with organizing the "*milicias*" in Ambos Camarines (two Camarines provinces) and Catanduanes.

Soriano, in her conclusion, challenged the American-written historical accounts on Bicol that "tended to belittle and discredit the Filipinos, particularly the Bicolanos' fight for independence."

She questioned the stories that "contended that the people willingly left their villages and were attracted to the Americans' 'policy of attraction.'"

THE HOUSE of Tomas Arejola in Peñafrancia, Naga City, which was built during the American period, still stands proud and majestic.
JUAN ESCANDOR JR.

Soriano showed that the people of Camarines Sur had proclaimed their independence and formed a revolutionary government even as the resistance movement went underground, after the resistance fighters led by Ludovico retreated from a four-day battle with the American soldiers on Feb. 19-23, 1900.

The war memoirs show that thousands of American soldiers were unloaded by warships on the shores of Calabanga, Camarines Sur, on Feb. 19, 1900.

On March 10, 1900, some 10,000 Bicolanos assembled in Taban, Minalabac, Camarines Sur, and decided to dismiss all chiefs and officials who showed cowardice and capitulated to the Americans. They elected Ludovico as the commander in chief.

The resistance force also included an eight-woman core, called the Damas Benemeritas de la Patria, that helped the injured and the sick, and brought clothes, provisions and medical attention to the Bicolano resistance fighters.

It was an organized force with defined authority, roles and functions of individuals who assumed positions in the movement.

Evidence

With the war of subjugation concentrated in Naga after the Filipino-American War sparked in Sta. Mesa, Manila, Soriano found evidence of war brutality that victimized women and children.

She cited an incident on Dec. 17, 1900 at "the height of application of stronger repressive measures under the guidance of Gen. MacArthur against Filipino resistance forces."

In one manuscript journal, a certain Captain Vasquez, one of the military officers of the revolutionary government, reported that the American soldiers burned houses in Minalabac. In the village of Concepcion in Naga City, people were rounded up, their necks tied with wires attached to the horses and were dragged like animals.

In 1901, at the final stage of war, the author said the American military operation heightened and spread to several towns and remote areas on the slopes of Mt. Isarog, where most of the men were suspected to be hiding. The memoirs showed instances of women being harassed and beaten by American soldiers who failed to extract from them information on the whereabouts of the men in the villages.

Women and children

The tactic of reconcentration of women and children, aimed at depriving the resistance of popular support, had been used in Camarines Sur earlier than the passage of the law that legitimized it—the Reconcentration Act—that was enforced beginning June 3, 1903, according to the author.

Soriano wrote: "On (Dec. 29, 1900), Captain Blancada reported that in the barrios of Pili, 300 women and children were brought to Pili proper. Those in San Felipe were brought to Magarao while the men were arrested and the carabaos were confiscated. The people of Mabatobato were rounded up and brought to Partido."

In January 1901, the American soldiers launched ambuscades and terrorized villages by burning houses and arresting people at night, according to several accounts in war memoirs.

With sheer force and strength in terms of number and war materiel, the resistance of three military companies were defeated easily by the advancing American soldiers. The Americans edged several notches in military might against the Bicolanos' poisoned arrows and a number of guns and pistols.

The American soldiers finally overpowered the resistance force, which surrendered in late 1901 at the time when all possible means of sustaining the war failed.

Day care workers in Marinduque get distance education

By Gerald Gene Querubin
Boac, Marinduque

FOR LOURDES PUENTE, A barangay day care worker for 10 years in Sta. Cruz, Marinduque, dealing with preschool children is a tough assignment.

"Handling and teaching preschool children from different backgrounds and with diverse personalities is a real challenge," Puente said.

In 1990, the government passed a law providing for care and protection for children up to 6 years old through day care centers.

The Marinduque State College (MSC) has been assisting workers in the day care centers, said Dr. Carlos Andam, MSC vice president for research and extension.

In school year 2000-2001, participants to the college's seminar-workshop on skills enhancement for day care workers requested for more trainings for the improvement of their services.

Curriculum

As an offshoot, the MSC, through its Child Care and Development Program (CCDP), developed a curriculum aimed at enhancing the knowledge of day care workers.

Julieta Go, CCDP project leader, said the two-year course would equip day care workers with skills to enable them to teach with greater confidence, and to develop appreciation of the significance of early childhood education.

Thus, the Diploma in Early Childhood Education (DECE) was developed and implemented to upgrade the teaching capability of the day care workers in all barangays of Marinduque.

It aims to transform the day care centers into early childhood education centers.

The curriculum was conceived based on the college's studies that showed that of the 218 day care workers in Marinduque, almost 41 percent were high school graduates only, 25 percent were college undergraduates and 34 percent college degree holders in different courses.

"The present educational system generally focuses on the development of teachers for the secondary and elementary schools. Only a handful of the tertiary educational institutions in the country offers the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education Degree. Hence, there is a shortage of qualified teachers for early childhood education.

Besides, the day care centers are intended to provide care to children of working mothers," said Go.

However, she said, if the day care centers were reoriented to cater to preschool education, that would certainly improve the developmental preparation of the child.

At the end of the course the day care workers, who are now just caregivers, are expected to be preschool educators, added Go.

The course also responds to Executive Order 340, requiring day care workers to have at least two years of college education.

The present core of day care workers in Marinduque are not available to go on study leave to pursue early childhood education courses, thus the course is taught by means of distance education.

Students are given learning modules through print, audio and video means.

Course teams composed of experts, instructional designers and editors prepare the learning packages.

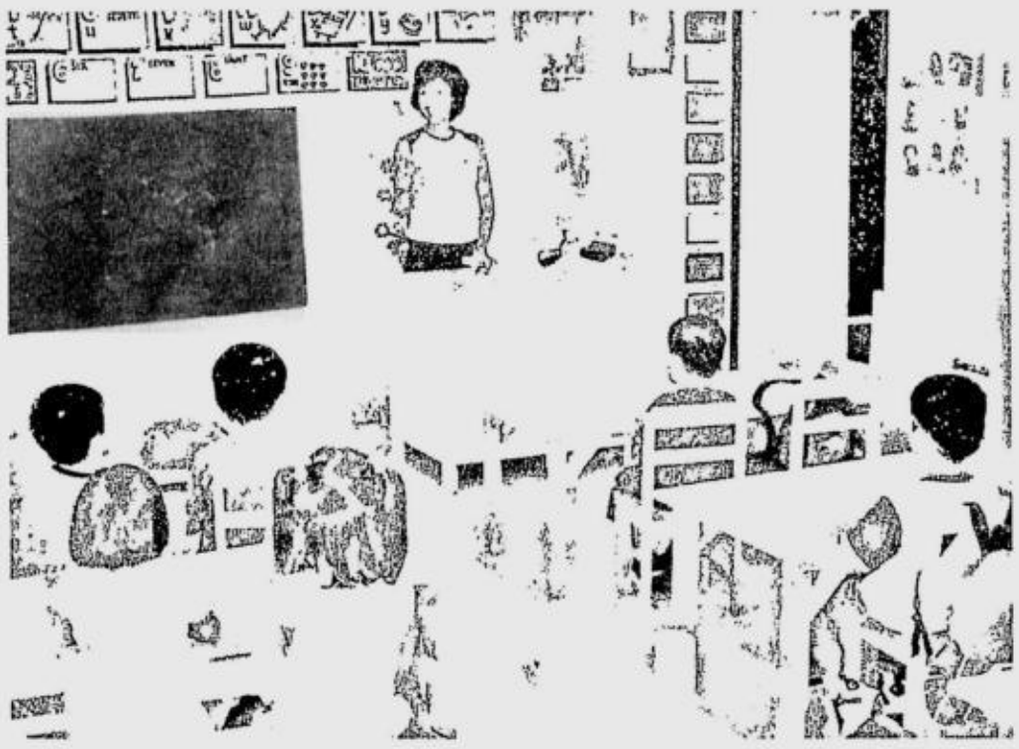
A vital component of the program is the tutorial or study sessions in which students interact face-to-face with their instructors, facilitators and classmates usually at the learning center or at the MSC.

At present, 221 day care workers from the six Marinduque towns are enrolled in the course. They started in the second half of last year and are expected to graduate in 2008.

Puente said the learning packages are easy to understand.

"I now understand day care students in terms of their diverse behaviors. We were taught how to deal with their diversities accordingly," she added.

A DAY CARE teacher in Marinduque enjoys the benefits of distance education courtesy of several government agencies.
GERALD GENE QUERUBIN



GOVERNMENT SERVICE INSURANCE SYSTEM
Financial Center, Pasay City, Metro Manila 1308

February 5, 2007

ADVISORY TO ALL ATTORNEYS-IN-FACT/HOLDERS OF SPECIAL POWER OF ATTORNEY OF OLD-AGE AND SURVIVORSHIP PENSIONERS RESIDING IN THE USA

In March 2007, GSIS will be launching the GSIS Wireless Automated Processing Systems (GW@PS), initially in the consular offices of Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York and Chicago. This will allow the electronic registration of old-age and survivorship pensioners residing in these areas and the subsequent issuance of the GSIS eCard Plus to which monthly pensions of these pensioners will be credited.

To effectively implement the electronic registration, please provide us with the following information:

RETIREE/PENSIONER (Surname, First Name, M.I.)	ADDRESS ABROAD	EMAIL ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.	CELLPHONE NO.

ATTORNEY-IN-FACT (Surname, First Name, M.I.)	ADDRESS IN THE PHILIPPINES	EMAIL ADDRESS	TELEPHONE NO.	CELLPHONE NO.

May we request you to please return the duly accomplished form on or before February 9, 2007 through fax no. (632) 891-6015 or via email to fmjavillo@gsis.gov.ph.

Your utmost cooperation will be highly appreciated. Thank you.

(Sgd.) WENCESLAO O. NIÑONUEVO III
Vice President – Social Insurance Operations Office II

SPORTS

Late Sports

More Sports stories on A21 to 24

SMB nips Red Bull, books finals slot

RED BULL slasher Cyrus Baguio drives hard to the hoop, knocking down San Miguel's Olsen Racela in the process and forcing Dondon Hontiveros to provide additional cover. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

By Musong R. Castillo

THIS GAME 7 WILL BEAR more pleasant memories for Dondon Hontiveros.

And for San Miguel, too.

Hontiveros knocked down the baskets that mattered most at the crunch last night to key a 119-115 victory by the Beermen over the Red Bull Barako at the Araneta Coliseum that put the Beermen in a dream title series for the Talk 'N Text PBA Philippine Cup.

The 6-foot-2 swingman did a lot of the damage from the perimeter, atoning for a 0-of-14 performance the last time these two teams clashed in a rubber match, to carry the Beermen to a title collision with sister team Barangay Ginebra.

Game 1 of the best-of-seven title series is tomorrow also at the Big Dome, following the knockout match for third place between Red Bull and Talk 'N Text.

Hontiveros finished with 31 points, 11 of them in the final period, as the Beermen held off the Barako to wrap up their semifinal series, 4-3.

The victory also erased the bitter memories of a similar loss to Red Bull last year at this same stage of the same tournament, when Junthy Valenzuela knocked in the marginal basket in the game where Hontiveros went scoreless.

The loss left Red Bull waiting for another year to win an all-Filipino title for the first time in franchise history. It was also the Barako's first Game 7 defeat in four tries.

Danny Seigle was actually the top man for San Miguel with 36 markers, but the timing in which Hontiveros nailed most of his baskets clearly made him the hero for the game.

"I told the players that this game is going to be won by something deeper," San Miguel coach Chot Reyes said. "I don't know if it is soul, heart of character. I just knew that it would take something like that to beat a team like Red Bull."

The final score actually did not reflect how dominant the Beermen were in the final period, where they opened up leads of as many as 17 points in the latter stages mainly because of Hontiveros and Seigle.

San Miguel scooted away early in the third period after a 10-0 run turned a 69-66 deficit into a 76-69 lead. Hontiveros gave the Beermen their first double-digit spread in the contest by scoring on a drive with 3:41 to play, 84-74.

The margin basically stayed within that range until Larry Fonacier shoved the Barako to within 98-89 after a free throw, before Hontiveros nailed two triples from the same spot in a 36-second span that opened up the game anew.

The Barako dug their own grave in the fourth quarter as they flubbed numerous free throws there, including seven in the first five minutes.

The Scores:

SAN MIGUEL 119—Seigle 36, Hontiveros 31, Tenorio 12, Wilson 8, Peña 8, Tugade 5, Racela 5, Espinas 4, Adducul 4, Ildefonso 4, Gonzales 2, Calaguio 0.

RED BULL 115—Villanueva 17, Fonacier 16, Valenzuela 16, Pennisi 16, Sharma 14, Baguio 9, Robinson 7, Najorda 6, Alvarez 6, Bugia 4, Cruz 3, Membrere 1.

Quarters: 26-all, 64-59, 88-81, 119-115.

Miñoza joins Malaysian Open

THE FIELD IS HEAVY WITH WORLD RANKED STARS led by former US Open champ Michael Campbell but newly crowned Philippine Open titlist Frankie Miñoza and three other Filipino bets are out to give them a tough challenge in the $1.3 million Malaysian Open at the Saujana Golf and Country Club in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, starting today. Miñoza and Rosales, who pulled off a 1-2 finish for the Philippines in the RP Open at Wack Wack on Sunday, will also try to improve on their positions in the Order of Merit. Miñoza is currently second while Rosales is No. 5 in the rankings. Juvic Pagunsan, meanwhile, is bent on redeeming himself after missing the cut in the RP Open while Angelo Que is also enjoying fine form for one of the biggest legs in this year's Asian Tour.

Pacman faces Solis in April

FILIPINO SUPERSTAR MANNY PACQUIAO will take on unbeaten Mexican Jorge Solis on April 21, topbilling a big pay-per-view card at The Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas.

According to ABS-CBN, Pacquiao will be facing the Guadalajara, Mexico, native in the main event of the card, which may also be aired by the giant network worldwide.

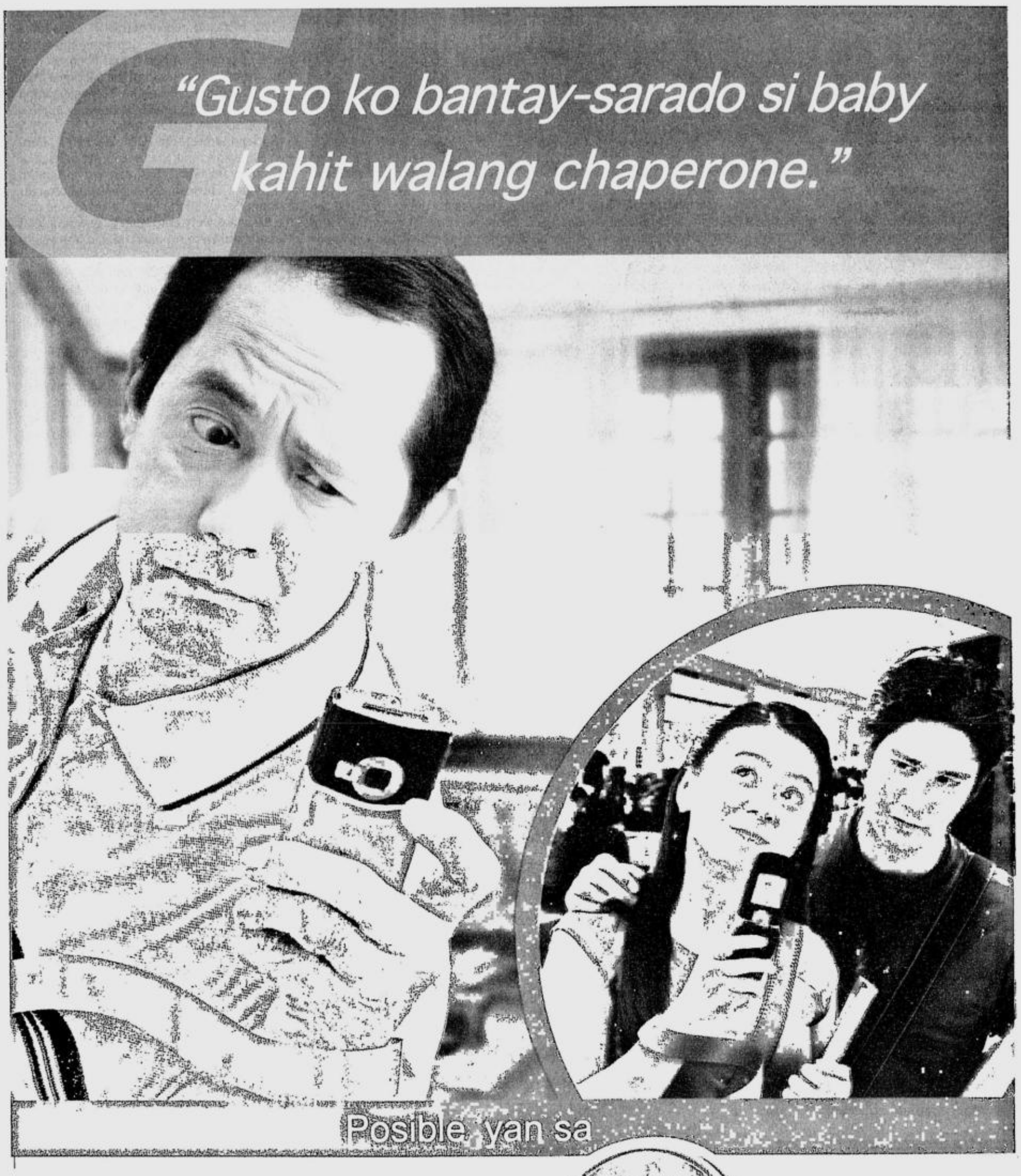
Pacquiao is set to start light training next week in General Santos City, where he is also slated to announce his candidacy for an elective post.

"I have not yet decided on what position to aspire for, but I'm definitely running in the elections," Pacquiao told ABS-CBN.

Early this week, Pacquiao and his younger brother Bobby took a high school equivalency test in General Santos City, a move that would allow them to get high school diploma even without formal schooling.

Pacquiao admitted that they had only finished elementary, pointing out that extreme poverty forced them out of school.

Also slated to see action is Fil-American Brian Viloria, who will battle Mexican Edgar Sosa for the vacant WBC light-flyweight crown. *Salven L. Lagumbay, Contributor*



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CA favors malls charging parking fees

Nothing explicit in building code about free spaces, court says

By Leila B. Salaverria

SHOPPING MALLS CAN CONtinue to charge parking fees after the Court of Appeals upheld a lower court ruling that the National Building Code (NBC) does not require department stores to provide their customers with free parking.

In affirming the ruling that favored SM Prime Holdings, Ayala Land Inc., Robinson's Land Corp. and Shangri-La Plaza Corp., the appellate court said there was nothing in the NBC and its implementing rules and regulations that explicitly stated that shopping mall operators should provide parking spaces to the public free of charge.

The case stemmed from the finding of two Senate committees in 2000 that it was illegal for shopping malls to collect parking fees because this was in violation of the building code.

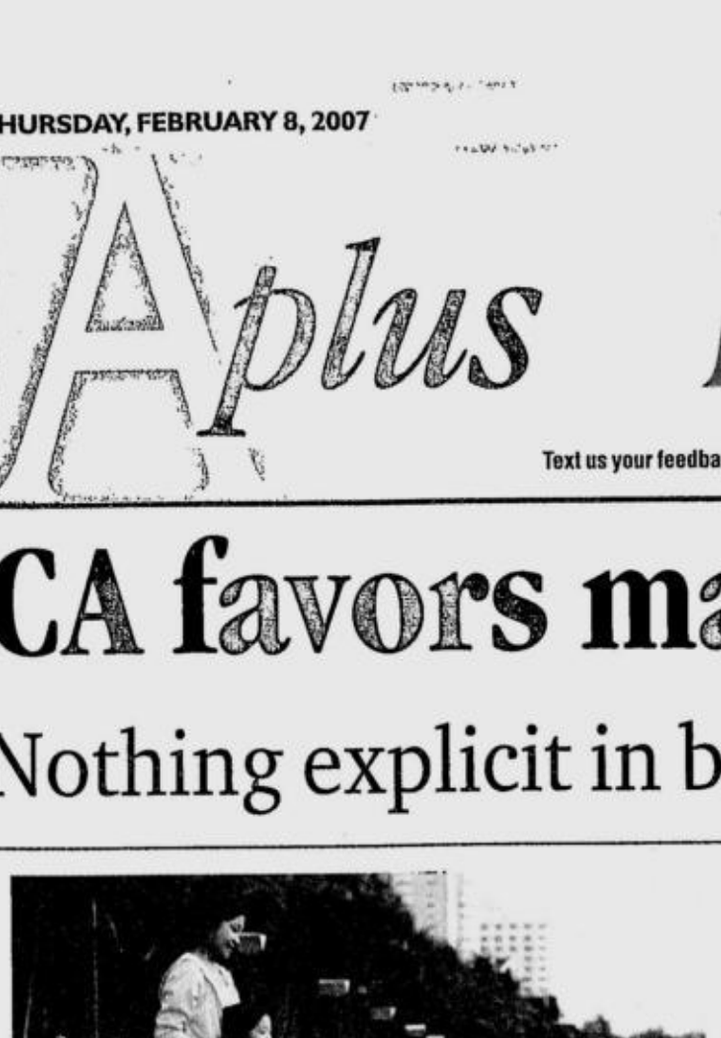
According to the Senate committees on trade and industry and justice and human rights, the collection of parking fees in shopping malls was illegal and anticonsumer.

The practice runs counter to the Consumer Act which protects consumers by setting standards of conduct for business and industry, the members of the committee added.

The finding led to the filing of two cases—one filed by SM Prime Holdings asking the Makati Regional Trial Court to assert the legality of collecting parking fees in its malls. The other was filed by Solicitor General Ricardo Galvez who opposed SM's petition.

The two cases were later consolidated into one and the Makati RTC ruled in favor of the shopping malls. The case was subsequently elevated to the Court of Appeals. According to the higher court, it found no error in the Makati court's observation that there was nothing in the building code that explicitly requires shopping mall operators to offer free parking spaces.

Many shopping malls charge their patrons a parking fee. Some collect a flat rate, while others charge by the hour.



BREAK TIME
A man takes a nap next to the seawall on Roxas Boulevard, hidden from the eyes of promenaders. EDWIN BACASMAS

NBI cleared of graft in GMA poster case

By Tina G. Santos

THE OFFICE OF THE OMBUDSman has cleared the National Bureau of Investigation of a graft complaint filed by the owner of the printing press that allegedly mass-produced posters depicting President Macapagal-Arroyo as comic book villain "Valentina" in 2005.

Named respondents in the graft complaint were the late NBI director Reynaldo Wycoco; former Interpol chief Ricardo Diaz (now NBI spokesperson and chief of the Criminal Intelligence Division); and former Interpol agents Dominador Villanueva (now Interpol executive officer) and Jose Garcia.

The Ombudsman said it found no probable cause to charge the respondents for violations of the provisions of RA 3019, otherwise known as the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

On July 20, 2005, NBI Interpol operatives raided the All Ways Graphics and Printing Services at 74-A Molave St., Proj. 3, Quezon City and seized bundles of the posters showing Ms Arroyo as Valentina.

Complainants Wilma de la Cruz-Ligot, owner of the printing press; and Ana Maria Nemenzo, of the Freedom from Debt Coalition, who reportedly placed the order for the posters, alleged that the search warrant of the raiding team was obtained maliciously.

They claimed that those involved in the production of the posters were harassed, intimidated and terrorized by the NBI during the raid, adding that they were merely exercising their constitutional right to freedom of expression.

However, Araceli Sonas-Crisostomo, the Ombudsman's graft investigation and prosecution officer 1, said the complainants failed to substantiate and submit proof of the alleged harassment, intimidation and act of terrorism by the respondents.

Sonas-Crisostomo added that the NBI operatives were armed with a valid search warrant and were performing their duties as peace officers when they conducted the raid.

It is still premature for the complainants to claim undue injury considering that the properties seized from the printing press were temporarily stored at the NBI evidence room pending a court order, she said.

"Also, it must be stressed that the case against the owner of the printing press for violation of Article 154 (unlawful publication) has yet to be decided by the court," the Ombudsman officer said.

DID YOU KNOW

MANDALUYONG City used to be a barrio, called San Felipe Neri by the Spaniards, in the province of Tondo. Under the Americans, it became a first class municipality with five barrios and was later consolidated with the municipality of San Juan del Monte.

In 1907, San Felipe Neri became an independent municipality. It was renamed Mandaluyong by virtue of House Bill No. 3836. In the 1960s, it became part of Metro Manila.

On Feb. 9, 1994, then President Fidel V. Ramos signed Republic Act No. 7675 which converted Mandaluyong into a city.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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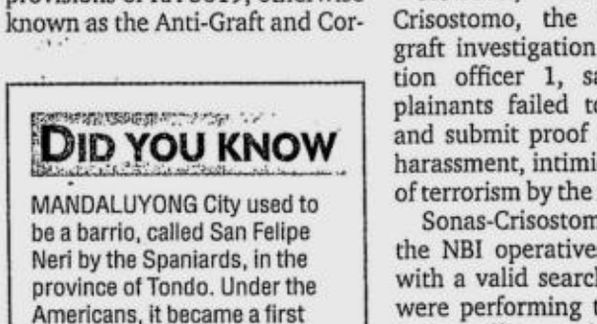

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With GMA's okay, Navotas moves closer to cityhood

By Nancy C. Carvajal

THE MUNICIPALITY OF NAVOTAS WILL SOON be the newest city in Metro Manila.

House Speaker Jose de Venecia and Senate President Manny Villar on Tuesday finally signed the bill pushing for the conversion of the municipality into a highly urbanized city with its own legislative district.

House Bill No. 5500 will now be transmitted to Malacañang for President Macapagal-Arroyo's approval. Once the bill is signed into law, a plebiscite will be conducted within 30 days to allow residents to vote for or against cityhood.

The Commission on Elections is tasked by the law to supervise the exercise, with the expenses to be shouldered by the participating municipality.

Under the law, any new city "shall acquire corporate existence upon the ratification of its creation by a majority of the votes cast by the qualified voters in a plebiscite to be conducted within 30 days from the approval of the act."

With Navotas' conversion into a city, residents will also have to elect their own representative to Congress in the coming May elections.

The bill was introduced by Malabon-Navotas Rep. Ricky Sandoval. It was passed on third and final reading by the House in August 2006 and by the Senate two months later.

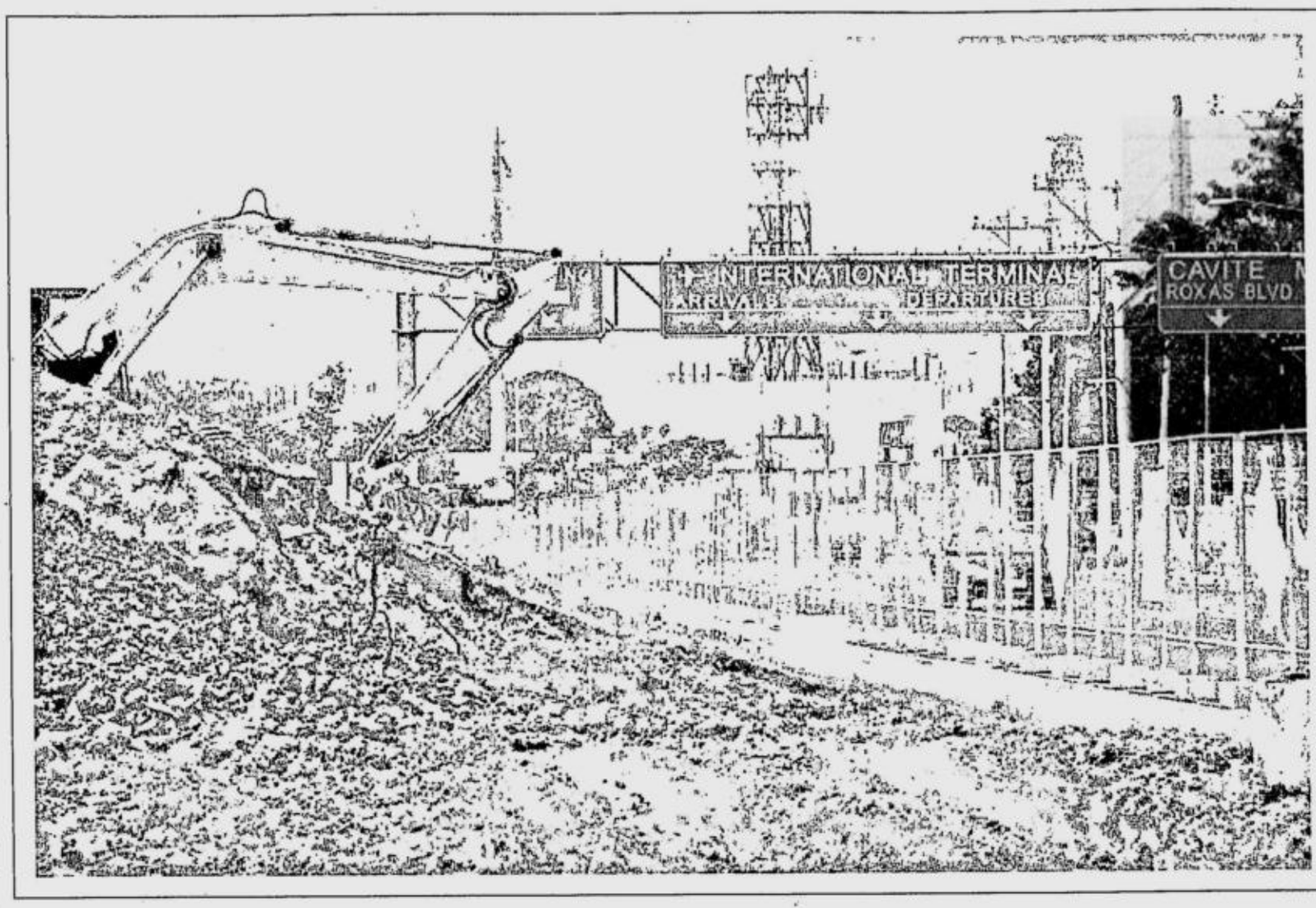
A bicameral committee approved the bill in November but Sandoval sent it back to the committee level after he disagreed with the Senate version of the proposed measure.

In Sandoval's version of the bill, Navotas will "continue to be part of the Malabon-Navotas district" even after its conversion into a city. According to the Senate version, however, "the city of Navotas shall have its own legislative district with the first representative to be elected in the next national elections after the effectivity of this act. Until such time, the city of Navotas shall continue to be represented by the incumbent representative in the House of Representatives."

The final version retained the amendment proposed by the Senate.

According to Tiangco, with the separation of the two districts, the additional allotment for Navotas as a city will greatly contribute to improving the lives of residents.

"There will be more benefits for the people as well as an improvement in the basic services because Navotas will have its own priority development assistance fund instead of sharing it with Malabon," he said.



GETTING READY A road widening project is ongoing in front of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport terminal 3 in Pasay City, part of preparations for the terminal's opening sometime this year. JESS YUSON

Beware of model jobs abroad, NBI warns

By Tina G. Santos

GIRLS WHO WANT TO WORK AS models abroad should first check out a recruiter's credentials before signing up for the job.

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) yesterday gave this warning following the arrest of an illegal recruiter accused of enticing 13 young girls to work as fashion models in Macau, China. The victims, however, ended up as sex slaves.

Macario Canaba, 32, who claimed to be a talent agent, was arrested on Monday by agents of the NBI-National Capital Region (NBI-NCR) office in an entrapment operation.

He now faces charges of estafa, large scale illegal recruitment and qualified human trafficking in the Makati City Prosecutor's Office.

Canaba's alleged partner, Analiza Fajardo, who introduced herself as a scriptwriter for a television network, remains at large.

Lawyer Ruel Lasala, chief of the NBI-NCR office, said the suspect had promised his victims jobs as fashion models in Macau, with a monthly salary of HK$8,000 (about P60,000).

The victims told the NBI that the suspects took them to a nightclub in Macau where they were forced into prostitution. The suspects also kept their plane tickets, passports, pocket money and other travel documents, they added.

Two of the victims said they were later sent home by the nightclub owner while the rest escaped.

On their return to Manila, they sought the help of the NBI which set up an entrapment operation.

Canaba, meanwhile, denied his victims' accusations and said that he did not know of their plight in Macau.

A check with the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration showed that Canaba was not authorized to recruit workers for overseas employment.

METROBRIEFS

Traffic rerouting

MOTORISTS headed for Mandaluyong tomorrow are advised to take alternative routes as traffic is expected to be heavy due to various activities scheduled on the city's 62nd anniversary. The celebration will affect vehicular flow on Maysilo Circle, Kalentong and Shaw Boulevard from 2 p.m. to 6 p.m., traffic officials said. Vehicles coming from Pasig and bound for Manila and San Juan should take Shaw Boulevard or Ortigas Avenue northbound, straight toward Edsa. Those coming from Manila going to Pasig may take F. Manalo Street, turn right on Kalentong Street, then on Shaw Blvd. through Edsa, to Pasig eastbound. Makati-bound vehicles coming from San Juan or Manila should take Haig Street, turn left on Shaw Boulevard, then right on Edsa southbound through Makati, or take Ortigas Ave., then right to Edsa.

Emman Cena

Third time unlucky

A WOMAN was arrested Tuesday night in Muntinlupa City after she tried to trick another woman into buying her house which had already been sold to two other buyers. Maria Joan Razon, 24, of Fernandez Street, Katarungan Village, Barangay Poblacion, was arrested in an entrapment operation by the police. Earlier, Josephine Bascon of Bacoor, Cavite, complained to the police that Razon had sold her a house that was already owned by someone else. She discovered this, the victim told the police, when she checked the title of the property with the Registry of Deeds. Charges of swindling and estafa will be filed against Razon, who is now in the custody of the Muntinlupa police.

Julie M. Aurelio

Floral art workshop

A SEMINAR-WORKSHOP on flower arrangement for business and leisure will be conducted by Ikebana Prof. Serapion S. Metilla from Feb. 21 to 25. The workshop will be held from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Manila Seedling Bank at the corner of Edsa and Quezon Avenue in Quezon City. The five-day workshop covers the following: Day 1—Ikebana with hands-on on moribana and Shoka, Day 2—Western style: All-around or one-sided and L-shape, Day 3—Western style: Crescent shape, Hogarth line and flowewr shop operation, Day 4—Free styles, buffet centerpieces and garland making and Day 5—Corsage, bridal bouquet-making and other wedding ensembles. A minimal fee will be charged for materials. Snacks, handouts and a certificate of completion will also be provided. Advance registration is required at least three days before the event. For more details, call 9394593, 4352479 or 0917-8321352.

Pasay residents assured of safe access road by mayor

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE PASAY CITY GOVERNMENT YESTERDAY assured residents of a Muslim community that it will make the alternate road leading to their neighborhood safe and convenient.

Mayor Allan Panaligan said he has already instructed the city engineer's office to fix up and clear the alternate road—a grassy 500-meter path which runs parallel to Roxas Boulevard and leads to the Edsa extension.

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) the other day tore down the remaining half of a makeshift footbridge that linked the neighborhood in Pasay City to Roxas Boulevard in Parañaque City.

The demolition was strongly opposed by the 5,000 residents in the area who said the footbridge was their only access to and from their homes.

The MMDA, however, said it had to destroy the structure to stop residents from going to Roxas Boulevard to sell their wares in makeshift stalls, adding more problems to the already congested area.

Panaligan, meanwhile, said the agency should have given them time to prepare an alternate road before tearing down the footbridge.

He added that he would coordinate with the Manila Electric Co. so that lampposts could immediately be installed in the area.

"I am really concerned about the safety of students who use the road at night," he told the INQUIRER.

"We will also ask the help of our congresswoman (Connie Dy) since this is a project of the national government," Panaligan added.

South-bound motorists can now use alternate route

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE SOUTH LUZON TOLLWAY Corp. has opened an alternate route to motorists as repair work is being rushed on the Alabang Viaduct in Muntinlupa City.

The SLTC, project owner of the South Luzon Expressway Rehabilitation and Upgrading, said that starting today, southbound motorists can use the toll plaza on Bunye Road toward the Filinvest area and Alabang-Zapote Road to avoid the inconvenience caused by ongoing construction work on the viaduct.

The new roadway will serve as an alternate to the Filinvest exit which will be closed to southbound traffic starting Feb. 22. But it will remain open to northbound motorists, Dittie Galang, SLTC public relations manager, announced in an advisory yesterday.

Road signs will be put up to guide motorists to the temporary route—a four-lane stretch with fully-operational toll lanes right before the Alabang Exit toward Laguna. The alternate route is an important component in the rehabilitation project of the SLEX, which began in November 2006, Galang added.

The P8.5-million rehabilitation project will involve the widening of the viaduct's bridge deck from six to eight lanes, the expansion of the four-lane highway to eight lanes from the Alabang viaduct to Sta. Rosa, Laguna and the construction of a new four-lane toll road from Calamba to Sto. Tomas, Batangas.

Deemed to be "structurally weak" that it may not withstand a strong earthquake, the viaduct's columns and footings will be completely restored. Its paneling and girders supporting the concrete lanes of the flyover will also be replaced.

The project will also expand the 28-km superhighway to 36 kilometers that would link up with the Star Expressway leading to the Batangas International Port.

Prisoners land in hospital because of fish

By Nancy C. Carvajal

TWELVE INMATES FROM THE CALOOCAN CITY jail were rushed to the hospital on Tuesday afternoon after they complained of severe itching and shortness of breath.

SJO2 Maximo Cayuman, a jail officer, told the INQUIRER that the inmates were brought to Diosdado Macapagal Hospital after eating "*tulingan*" (fish), for lunch.

He added that some of the inmates asked to be brought to the hospital after they began to feel itchy and developed red spots all over their bodies.

A nurse from the hospital confirmed the incident with the INQUIRER, but said the inmates were immediately released after treatment.

"The allergies were superficial and did not cause any reason for further confinement in the hospital," said Gilda Armas.

Not prison ration

Cayuman clarified that the fish eaten by the inmates was not part of the prison's rations.

The dish was brought by a visitor of one of the inmates, he added.

Cayuman also denied reports that the incident was part of a plot to stage a jailbreak.

"*Hindi nila kayang tumakas kasi marami silang mga guwardia* (They cannot escape because they are well-guarded)," Cayuman said.

Marines blame GMA for Sulu booboo

ON TARGET *Ramon Tulfo*

WHEN A SOLDIER'S MORALE IS low because his wife or child is sick, or his good work is not appreciated by his superiors, or if his superiors think he should be punished for killing the enemy in a legitimate combat, that soldier will slink away in a corner the next time the enemy shoots at him. He will refuse to fight.

This soldier's low morale will spill over to his comrades because insubordination or cowardice can be infectious. That is just one soldier. Imagine the situation when thousands of soldiers lose their will to fight.

That is the state of the morale of the Philippine Marine Corps, the Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) elite combat unit, as I see it.

Never has the Marine Corps' morale been at its lowest. Blame it on the stupid handling of the two-day Sulu hostage crisis that ended with the Moro hostage-takers winning a concession at the expense of the Marine Corps.

The government practically granted all of the Moros' demands in exchange for the release of Marine Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, Undersecretary for the Peace Process Ramon Santos, and 20 of their subordinates.

One of the demands of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) that was granted by the government was the compensation for families of eight MNLF members who were killed in an encounter with the Marines last month. In that fire fight, three Marines were also killed.

The Marines were going after members of the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group who had sought refuge in an MNLF camp. The MNLF prevented the Marines from continuing their hot pursuit of the Abu Sayyaf, triggering a fire fight.

The government agreed to the MNLF's demand to pay the families of the slain MNLF members. It also reportedly returned the guns and ammunition confiscated by the Marines from the dead rebels. Paying compensation for the dead MNLF members was a big insult to the three Marines who died in the firefight. It means that those three Marines died in vain.

"*Sir, paano naman yung namatay na mga* Marines? *Parang sinabi ng gobiyerno na mali ang ginawa namin sa paghabol sa Abu Sayyaf.*

"(What about the Marines who were killed? It's as if the government said we were wrong in going after the Abu Sayyaf)," said a Marine captain.

I've talked to a number of Marine officers and enlisted men about their reaction to the government's grant of compensation for the slain MNLF rebels.

They all blame Maj. Gen. Benjamin Dolorfino, for being too trusting, and Secretary for the Peace Process Jesus Dureza, for giving in to the compensation demand. Above all, they blame their Commander in Chief, President Macapagal-Arroyo, for not standing up to the Moros.

A Marine sergeant told me that Dolorfino should not have gone to the camp in the first place, because of a previous episode that turned out to be tragic.

That Marine enlisted man was referring to the fate of Army Brig. Gen. Teodulfo Bautista and his men who were killed in 1977 inside an MNLF camp while on a peace mission.

Dolorfino, who is my *compadre*, is married to a pretty Muslim woman.

He is well respected by his co-officers and subordinates.

I wonder if they still have the same high regard for him after the Sulu hostage drama.

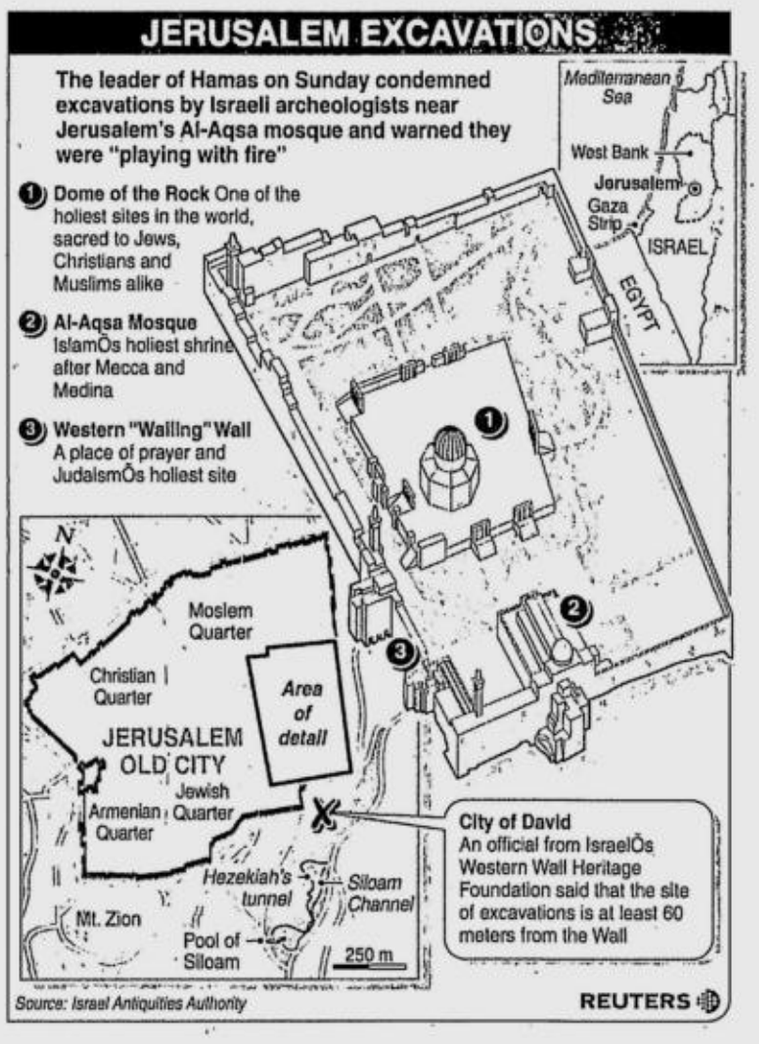
Yet can you blame Dolorfino for being a good soldier?

He was apparently following orders from upstairs to proceed to the rebel camp.

It looked like General Dolorfino and Undersecretary Santos were sent by the government to the rebel camp to appease the MNLF (for heaven's sake, why?—RT) for the death of eight of its members who were killed in a fire fight with Marine troops.

The WORLD

Editor Luverne B. Gueco



US, Iraqi forces launch crackdown vs militias

BAGHDAD—IRAQI AND US FORCES WEDNESday pushed deep into a notorious Sunni bastion of Baghdad, making arrests and seizing weapons in what was touted as the start of a new security plan to overrun insurgent strongholds in the capital.

A US military official said a crackdown on Sunni insurgents in the northeastern Adhamiyah district of the Iraqi capital began Tuesday in an operation involving some 2,000 US troops and hundreds of Iraqi soldiers.

According to an AFP photographer embedded with the US military more than a dozen people were detained overnight and large numbers of weapons seized.

Major Robie Parke of 3-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team said the security sweep in the Shaab and Ur areas of Adhamiyah marked the start of the much-vaunted crackdown by US and Iraqi forces against Shiite militias and Sunni insurgents in Baghdad.

"Iraqi and US forces conducted clearing operations in Adhamiyah today, which is the beginning of the new security plan," Parke told AFP late Tuesday.

Parke said close to 2,000 US troops were involved in Operation Arrowhead Strike Six, along with the 1st Brigade of the 9th Iraqi Army Division.

An aide to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki who asked to remain anonymous, however, denied that the security crackdown had begun.

The Baghdad plan, announced by US President George W. Bush along with a decision to deploy another 21,500 US combat troops in Iraq, aims to clear bastions held by insurgents and militia who have been responsible for the deaths of tens of thousands of people in the past year.

Iraq's independent daily Al-Mada said Wednesday that the "massive deployment and troop movements on both banks of Tigris yesterday is a clear signal of the actual launch or that the launching of the new plan was near." *AFP*

Wal-Mart faces biggest sex bias case

SAN FRANCISCO—THE BIGGEST sexual discrimination case in US history advanced against Wal-Mart Stores Inc. on Tuesday when a top court ruled that more than a million women could join a suit charging bias in pay and promotions.

The plaintiffs estimate they could win billions of dollars in lost pay and damages and that as many as two million women who have worked for Wal-Mart in its US stores since 1998 could join a class-action lawsuit.

"It is time for Wal-Mart to face the music," Brad Seligman, a lawyer for The Impact Fund, a nonprofit group in Berkeley, California representing the female plaintiffs, told reporters.

"Two courts now have ruled that Wal-Mart is going to have to face a jury ... We fully expect Wal-Mart to keep appealing but we're very confident now that two courts have upheld this (class) certification," he said.

Lead plaintiff Betty Dukes, 56, who works as a greeter at a Wal-Mart east of San Francisco, said she had let out a cheer while at work. "I am absolutely overjoyed," Dukes said.

The 2-1 ruling by the three-judge panel of the US 9th Circuit Court of Appeals took no position on Dukes's claims, stressing the decision only affirmed a lower court ruling to certify the case as a class action against the world's largest retailer.

Wal-Mart has been a lightning rod for controversy, accused of underpaying workers and undermining small business with its huge stores, charges that it has roundly denied, pointing to itself as a major source of jobs.

The company said it would appeal the ruling to a larger panel of the 9th Circuit, and the US Supreme Court if necessary.

"This was one step in what is going to be a long process, and we are still at a very early stage in this case," said Ted Boutrous, lead counsel for Wal-Mart's appeal. "We are very optimistic about our chances for obtaining relief from this ruling as the case progresses." In a class action, individuals bring a suit on behalf of a larger group that suffered similar harm. In the Wal-Mart case, six other women join Dukes as the plaintiffs.

"Class actions have been for four decades now the critical ingredient in employment discrimination litigation," said William Gould, a Stanford University emeritus professor of law.

"There is very little incentive for the defendants to change their practices unless a finding is made that there is a nexus between the named plaintiffs and the group," Gould said. *Reuters*

Israeli excavation in Jerusalem stirs Muslim anger

JERUSALEM—PALESTINIANS warned Israel on Tuesday that a ceasefire deal in Gaza would unravel if Israeli excavation work near a compound housing al-Aqsa mosque damaged Islam's third holiest shrine.

Israel said the excavation work, which began on Tuesday when bulldozers started breaking paving stones outside the compound, would not cause harm to the site in Jerusalem's walled Old City, the heart of Arab-Israeli conflict.

But President Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction said any damage to al-Aqsa would release Palestinian militant groups from a ceasefire with Israel in the Gaza Strip.

The governing Hamas movement said "any assault" on the mosque "will lead to a termination of the limited ceasefire" declared in November and would spark "a volcano of anger." Israel's Antiquities Authority said it was searching for artifacts at the base of the compound known to Muslims as Haram al-Sharif and to Jews as Temple Mount, before construction of a pedestrian bridge to replace a ramp leading up to the complex.

Israel's opening of an entrance to an archaeological tunnel near Haram al-Sharif in 1996 triggered Palestinian protests and led to clashes in which 61 Arabs and 15 Israeli soldiers were killed.

Two bulldozers began breaking up parts of the pavement at the foot of the ramp, damaged by a snowstorm and an earthquake in 2004, to clear the way for what the authority called a "salvage excavation." After an all-clear that no artifacts remain, plans can be finalized for the 100-meter bridge to the Mughrabi Gate entrance to Haram al-Sharif, which overlooks Judaism's Western Wall.

Palestinian Prime Minister Ismail Haniyeh of Hamas said before leaving for unity talks with Fatah in Mecca that Israel was out to cause "direct harm" to al-Aqsa. *Reuters*

Video of US friendly fire unleashes storm in UK

LONDON—US AND BRITISH OFFICIALS DEnied trying to bury details of a "friendly fire" incident on Tuesday when a cockpit video was leaked in which US pilots are heard weeping after mistakenly killing a British soldier in Iraq.

A British coroner's inquest into the death of Lance Corporal Matty Hull has reignited questions over whether the allies did enough to shield troops from friendly fire—and whether both countries wanted to keep the details hidden.

"I'm going to be sick," one pilot in an A-10 attack jet can be heard saying when he realizes he has opened fire on a friendly convoy. "We're in jail, dude." Another pilot is later heard weeping: "I'm dead." Hull was killed when his convoy of light British tanks was strafed by American A-10 attack jets during the second week of the 2003 invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein.

Coroner Andrew Walker suspended his probe last week after he learned that there was a cockpit video which he had not been allowed to use or to show the family.

Washington had given the video to British authorities but refused to allow it to be shown to the coroner, saying it might contain security secrets. The British government denied hiding it but said it could not release it without US permission.

After the video was shown all day on UK television, a US defense official said it could now form part of the inquest.

"We have authorized the UK Ministry of Defense to display the full video in camera to the coroner and the family in the presence of a Ministry of Defense authority," a Pentagon official said on condition of anonymity.

Washington said its own investigation exonerated the pilots.

"The investigators determined that the pilots followed the procedures and processes for engaging targets," US Defense Department spokesperson Bryan Whitman said.

But US officials have refused British requests to send the pilots to travel to Britain to testify in the inquest.

Hull's widow said she was glad the video was now public.

"I would have preferred to hear the evidence from the US pilots themselves. However, they cannot be compelled to come and they have not come voluntarily. The video is therefore vital evidence and must be shown," Susan Hull said in a statement.

"After years of being told that it did not exist or was secret I feel that it was right not to give up hope." *Reuters*

WORLDBRIEFS

Britain launches fund vs Muslim extremism

LONDON—Britain launched a five million pound ($ 9.9 million) fund Wednesday to fight Muslim extremism at the grassroots level, calling it a "battle for hearts and minds." The need to counter Islamist militants was underlined by last week's arrest of nine suspects in antiterror raids in Birmingham, to foil an alleged "Iraq-style" kidnap and beheading plot. The funds will be available to town halls across the country as part of what Prime Minister Tony Blair called a "radical and head-on" fight with extremists whipping up anti-Western passions. "As the events of the last week show, community tensions are high in some parts of Britain and the security threat remains serious," Communities Secretary Ruth Kelly was expected to say at the formal launch of the fund. *AFP*

Swiss man to be tried for insulting Thai king

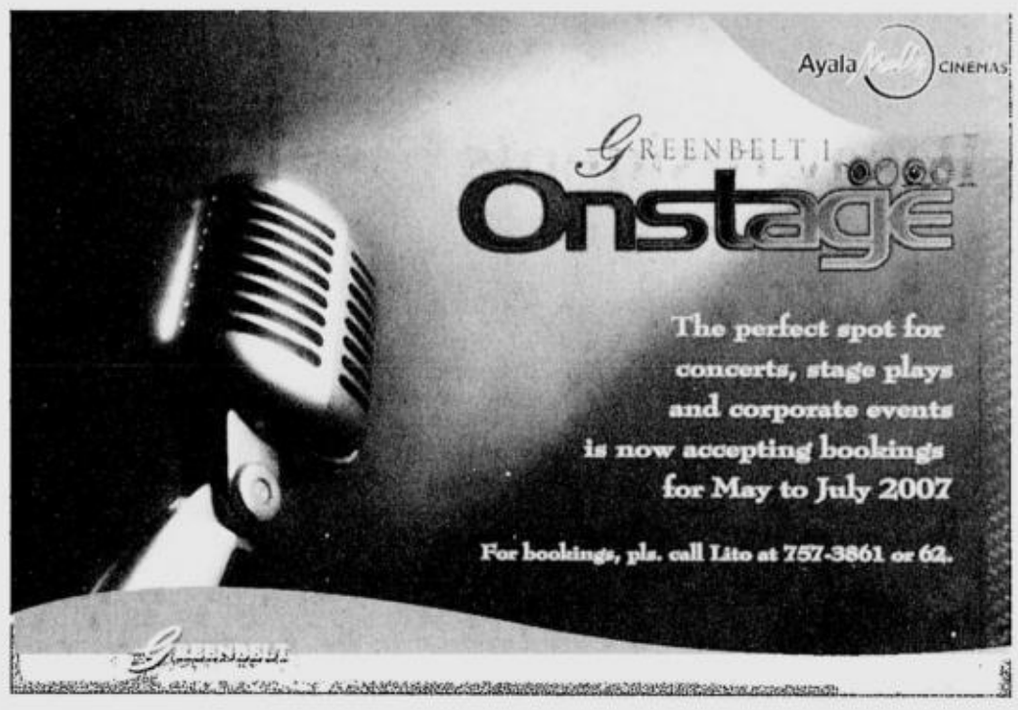
BANGKOK—A Swiss man will go on trial in Thailand next month facing 75 years in jail for defacing images of King Bhumibol Adulyadej during a drunken spree on the revered monarch's birthday, officials said on Wednesday. The trial of Oliver Rudolf Jufer, 57, charged with five separate acts of lese majeste, would start on March 12 in the northern city of Chiang Mai where he lived, they said. Police would seek consecutive jail terms for Jufer on each count carrying jail terms of between three and 15 years after he daubed the portraits of the king, whom many Thais regards as semi-divine, with black paint. Jufer has been in jail since he was arrested in December. *Reuters*

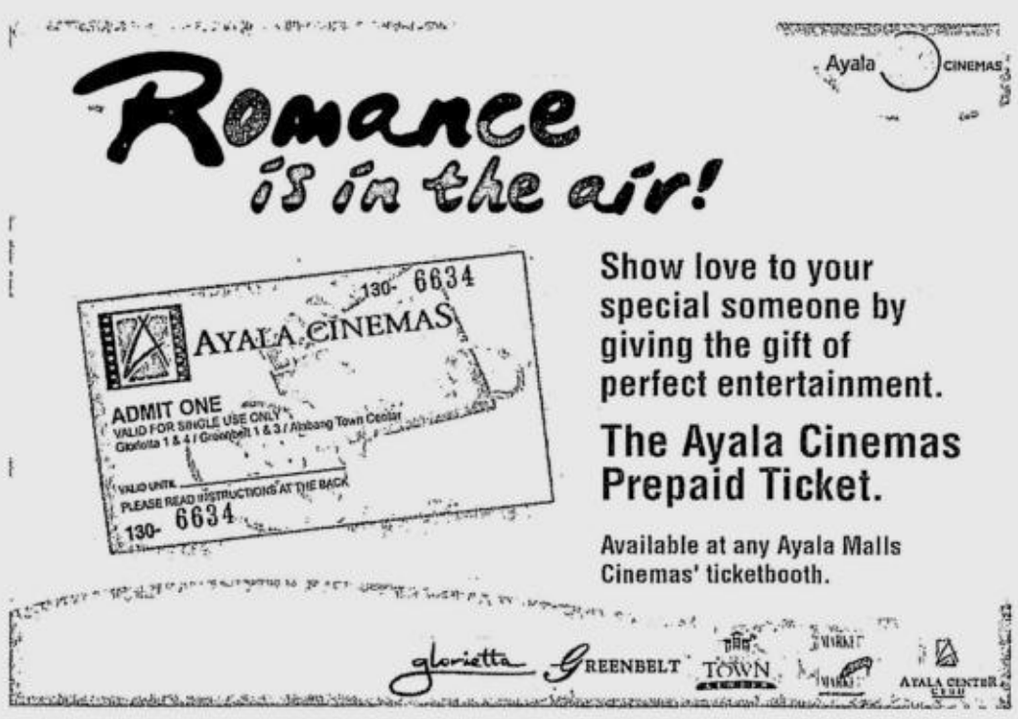
New military command for Africa

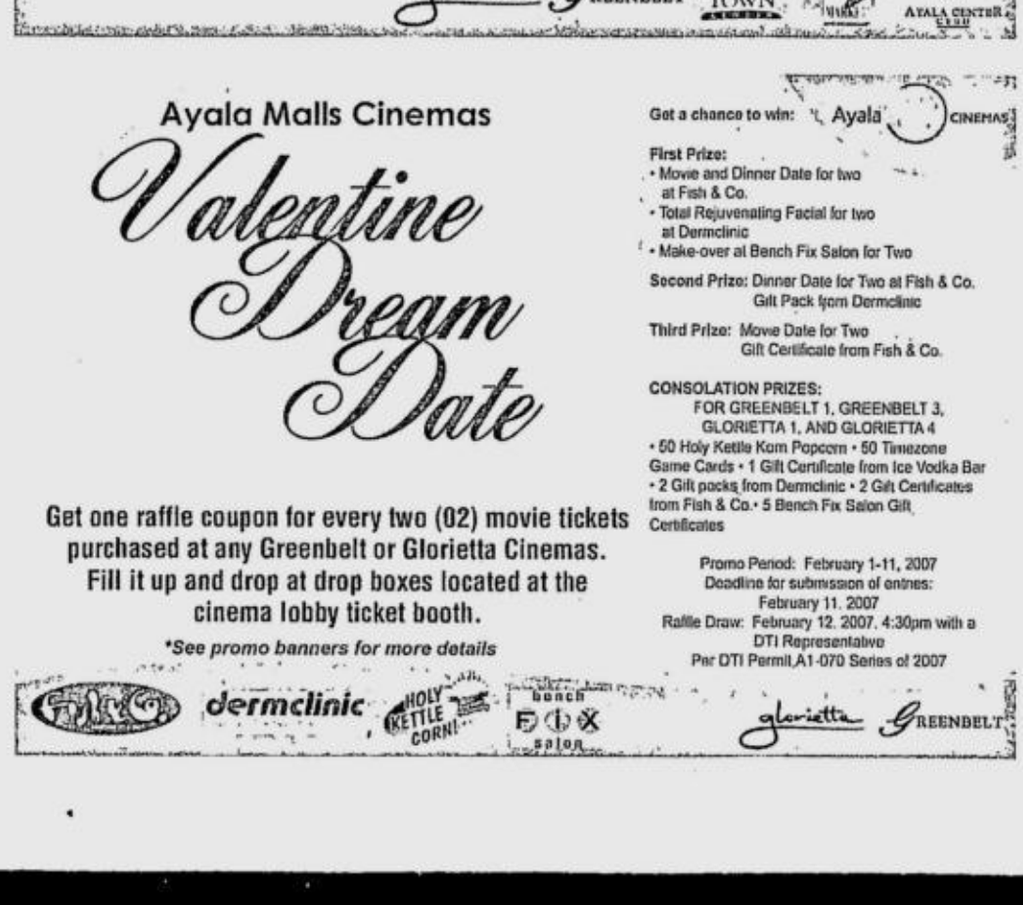
WASHINGTON—President George W. Bush said on Tuesday he had approved plans to create a US military command for Africa, a move that reflects increased US strategic interest in the continent. Bush's decision was the culmination of a long debate that gained momentum as Washington grew more concerned about Islamist militancy in parts of Africa and more attracted by the potential of the continent's natural resources. "This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa," he said. Bush said he had asked Defense Secretary Robert Gates to get the new Africom unit up and running by the end of September 2008. *Reuters*

New death heightens bird flu fears

BRUSSELS—Worldwide concern over the deadly bird flu grew Tuesday after a teenaged girl died in Egypt and as the EU debated how to contain a British outbreak of the virus. British officials briefed European Union counterparts in Brussels about the measures they have taken after the virulent H5N1 bird flu strain was detected on a British turkey farm. About 160,000 turkeys have been slaughtered. And anxieties increased after it was revealed that a veterinarian involved in the outbreak of bird flu in eastern England has been admitted to hospital with a mild respiratory illness. Nour Nadi, 17, of Egypt became the 166th person in the world to die of bird flu. Worldwide, 271 people have been diagnosed with bird flu. *AFP*







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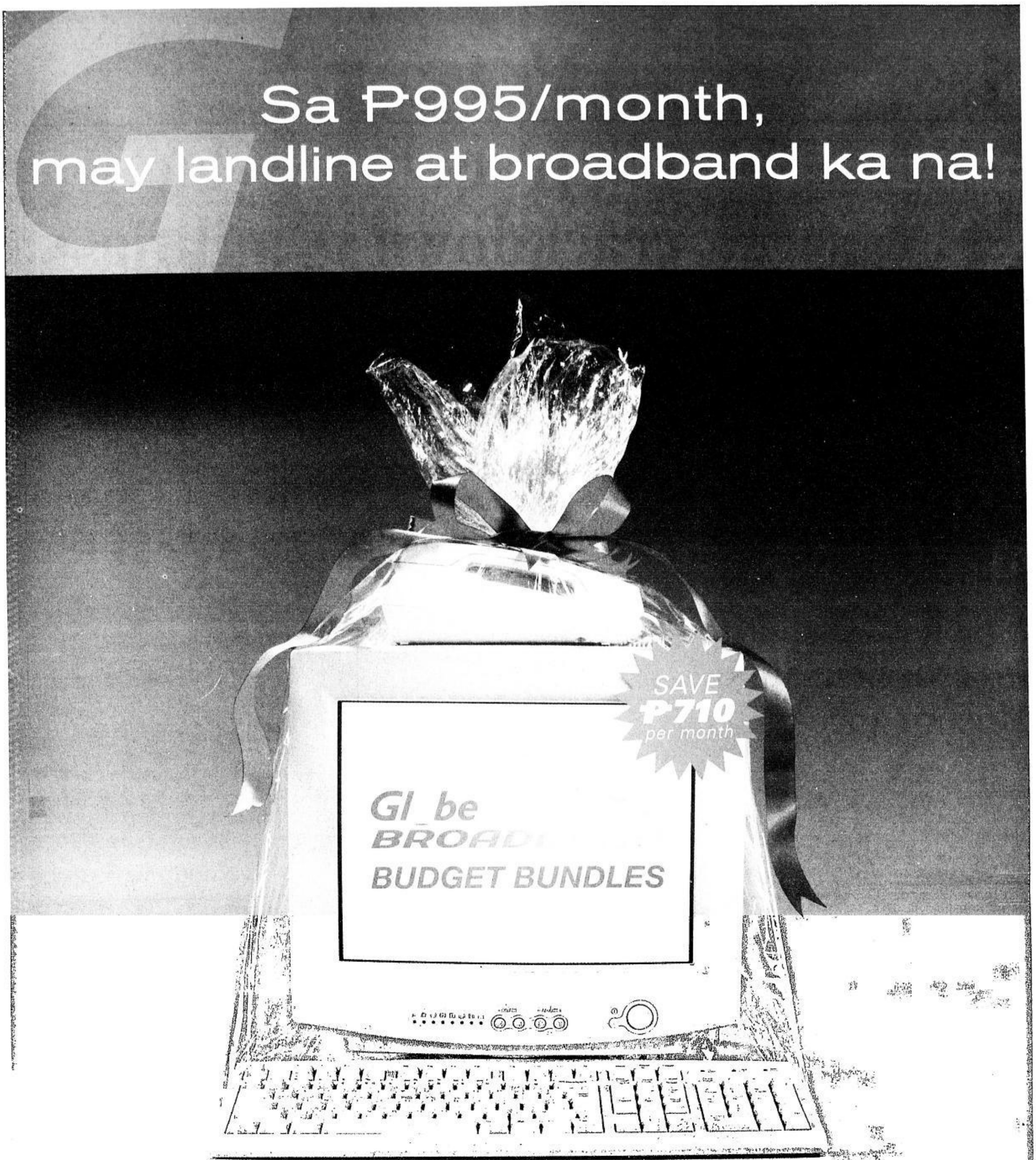

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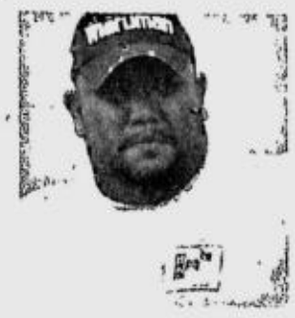

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SPORTS

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■ **Pistons hand** Celtics 15th straight defeat /A24

Hapee, Toyota Otis go for the jugular

GAMES TODAY (*Olivarez Sports Center*)
2 p.m.—Hapee-PCU vs Mail & More
4 p.m.—Toyota Otis vs Harbour Centre

JASON Castro (left) hopes to help Hapee end the series against Mail and More today. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

HAPEE-PCU AND TOYOTA OTIS ARE JUST one step from forging a date in the 2007 PBL Unity Cup championship, but Mail and More and Harbour Centre plan to gate-crash the party.

The Teeth Masters and the Sparks need just one more win to advance to the finals and they hope to get it today in their respective Game 4s at the Olivarez Sports Center, although both will have different motives for sealing the victory.

For Toyota Otis coach Louie Alas, a victory today would be sweet revenge over the team that frustrated them during the last conference.

Though he claimed that what happened last year—when they led the series, 1-0, only to drop the two last games and yield the title—was water under the bridge, it is clear that Alas wants payback for that sorry episode of his coaching career.

"What happened last year was already a thing of the past. This is a new war for us and I believe we have a very good chance of wrapping up the series," said Alas. "The boys are raring to finish the series."

He hopes to get the same intensity he got last time around from role-player Chito Jaime, who helped secure a 73-60 win over the Port Masters last Tuesday.

A different drama unfolds in the Hapee Toothpaste-PCU and the resurgent Mail and More semis duel.

Just when everybody thought their number was up, the Comets stood up and averted a sweep, beating the Teeth Masters, 78-62, to stay alive.

Though the Comets still trail the series, 1-2, coach Lawrence Chongson is confident that their triumph could change the trend in the semis.

"I was just able to motivate them well in Game 3 that's why they played so well—I hope we'll have the same mind-set in Game 4," said Chongson. "I know they will make some adjustments but we'll be ready for them."

Hapee's main man Jason Castro could only score 10 points in the first two quarters before going silent in the crucial stretch. He was also thoroughly outplayed by rival Mike Bravo who quarterbacked Mail and More's speedy game.

That could be among the adjustments Hapee will try to fine-tune going into the game. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CANDIDATES

Trinidad takes name off list

By June Navarro and Marc Reyes

TWO PROSPECTS FOR THE EXECUTIVE director post of the Basketball Association of the Philippines-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (BAP-SBP) have politely taken their names off the unofficial list of candidates earlier floated by several sources.

Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) spokesperson Joey Romasanta said he would beg off when the offer comes along while Philippine Basketball League commissioner Chino Trinidad strongly believes that there were individuals more qualified for the job.

Romasanta batted for former Philippine Basketball Association commissioner Jun Bernardino as the man capable of efficiently running the show of the fledgling association's day-to-day operations.

"Mr. Bernardino is perfectly suited for that job," said Romasanta, who is reportedly part of a short-list of candidates that includes former PBA finance officer Ricky Palou, PLDT executive Al Panlilio and former PBA player Fritz Gaston.

BERNARDINO

TRINIDAD

Apart from his compelling credentials, Bernardino has the expertise and technical know-how seasoned by his decade-long experience as point man of the PBA from the '90s up to 2003.

"I'm deeply honored to be considered as one of the candidates for the post," said Bernardino.

"Anything that I can do for Philippine basketball, I will always be glad to be of help," he added.

BAP-SBP president Manny V. Pangilinan announced that the group will form a search committee whose chief task is to find the right man for the job.

Pangilinan also opened the possibility of tapping a foreigner as executive director on the advice of Fiba (International Basketball Federation) secretary general Patrick Baumann, who graced the unity congress last Monday.

The profile of the executive director would probably be released as soon as the BAP-SBP receives the blessings of the POC.

The Olympic body has called for a general assembly scheduled on Feb. 16 to tackle the membership of the new national sports association for basketball.

After the general assembly, the imprimatur of the POC will be transmitted to the Fiba for the lifting of the country's suspension along with the key documents that led to the formation of the new cage body.

In a statement released from his office, Trinidad said there are people whom he thinks can handle the job better following reports that he's included in the "short-list" of candidates.

"In all honesty there are some individuals who are more qualified than me, let us give others the chance to help the association," said Trinidad, who is also one of the 25 members of the BAP-SBP board of trustees.

Reports also cropped up that not just one person would be named for the position, meaning that aside from the executive director, the BAP-SBP will also name two subordinates to make the post a committee of sorts.

"But for those who considered me for the position, thank you very much for your trust and confidence in me," said Trinidad. "I've done my share in forming a united body but prudence dictates me that being a commissioner of the PBL and at the same time working as a broadcast journalist would not be good if I would accept even the nomination."

What really happened in Bangkok

IN HUDDLE

Beth Celis

SOME OF THE best things that happen in this world are not planned. This is what BAP executive vice president Christian Tan told me as we were all preparing to call it a day following the marathon BAP-SBP Unity Congress held at the Dusit Hotel last Monday.

Christian related that he had just returned from a long trip to the United States when he was requested by newly installed BAP president Go Teng Kok to go to Bangkok with legal counsel Boni Alentajan the following day.

"Our mission was to make a report to the Fiba which was at the time holding a tournament for ladies 18 years and under. It was GTK who was scheduled to go, but his mother's sudden death prevented him from leaving. I tried to beg off because I was so tired, but there was nobody else who could go in lieu of GTK. I was forced to go," Christian said.

***

Christian and Alentajan arrived a day ahead of Manny Pangilinan and his group. All they expected to do was make a report to Fiba secretary general Patrick Baumann. But Baumann, probably having the succeeding SBP meeting in mind, called a full-quorum meeting, which included Fiba Asia president Sheikh Saud, Fiba-Asia secretary general Dato Yeoh Choo Hock and Fiba-Asia deputy secretary general Hagop Khagirian.

"Before we knew it, Patrick was asking for a copy of the BAP's constitution and bylaws which we had to get from Manila by fax. We combed through it, picking up talking points. By this time, we realized we were talking about integration.

The entire process took all day, all night, stretching all the way up to the wee hours of the following morning, long after the SBP group had joined the party.

At break of dawn, a handwritten new set of articles of incorporation had been drafted, all under the name BAP-SBP Inc. The unification had actually happened right there in Bangkok without the expected conflict.

Unplanned, so parties claim.

***

The good news from Turkey, according to NCFP president Prospero Pichay, is that former Fide head Florencio Campomanes is recovering from massive injuries he sustained in a car accident.

The chess federation of Turkey has reported that Campo, who is turning 80 soon, is breathing better and can now sit up. His fever has abated, which is a very good sign, and he is set to be discharged from the ICU. He should also get a new cast soon, although it wasn't clear where it would be wrapped around. For sure it won't be for his ribs because none were broken.

***

Veteran colleague Ronnie Nathanielsz, who recently spoke with Rudy Distrito and his lawyer Dan Silverstein in a three-way overseas telephone call from inside Rudy's detention cell in Las Vegas, is appealing for support for the former PBA cager.

Silverstein is gathering favorable testimony from friends, fans, players and officials who knew Rudy personally and who could testify that while he played a rugged game of basketball, off-court he was a kind, gentle and generous person—which he really was.

So far, Living Legend Sonny Jaworski, former PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino and ex-team manager Elmer Yanga and many other names have committed to write their thoughts which can be sent directly to: Dan Silverstein, South 3rd Street, Room 226, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89155, USA or Ronnie Nathanielsz, Viva Sports, 7th Floor, East Tower, Tektite Bldg., Pasig City.

Ronnie said he had much difficulty holding back tears during the emotional conversation with Rudy, whom he admired as a player who embodied the legendary never-say-die spirit of Ginebra.

***

HOOPVINE: Who will be chosen for the much coveted position of BAP-SBP secretary general? Everyone is just so curious to know if BAP-SBP officials already have a short list. I don't think they do, not at this point... Joel Banal has recently joined the coaching staff of Alaska... Tickets to the one-night only Cliff Richard concert on Feb. 13 at the Araneta Coliseum are now available at Ticketnet outlets, the Araneta Coliseum ticket booth and SM department stores. For ticket inquiries, call 911-5555... Sir Cliff, now 66, promised to dish out a repertoire of songs familiar to the Filipino audience, although there will be new songs, too. He is likely to belt out choice tracks from his recently released duet album "Two's Company."

RP Davis Cup squad taking no chances

FACED WITH RIVALS WHO KNOW WHAT Group I competition is like, the Filipino Davis Cuppers have decided to use whatever advantage they can find against their Pakistan counterparts.

And so they're going with a hard, fast and burning surface that still has echoes of past glorious moments.

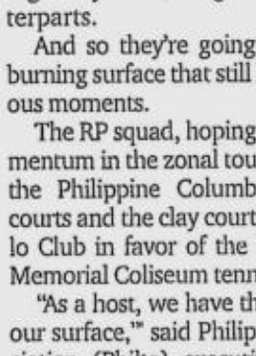
The RP squad, hoping to ride the wave of momentum in the zonal tournament, opted to ditch the Philippine Columbian Association's shell courts and the clay courts of the posh Manila Polo Club in favor of the hardcourts of the Rizal Memorial Coliseum tennis center.

"As a host, we have the prerogative to choose our surface,'" said Philippine Lawn Tennis Association (Philta) executive vice president Ajay Pathak.

And Pathak feels that such a surface favors the team led by Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino. That squad takes on Pakistan tomorrow in the Asia-Oceania Group II tie. The draw will be held at 10 a.m. today at the Sheraton Hotel.

The surface calls for fast-paced action and that should suit the Philippine side; which is also composed of PJ Tierro and Johnny Arcilla.

Aside from the speed, the Rizal tennis courts have the tendency to heat up once it takes a beating from the midmorning sun. And it has the tendency to dry up players who aren't used to its toasting conditions.


TAINO

"They (the players) are very at home with the fast surface," said Pathak.

But beyond the physical advantages of holding the event there, the Rizal Memorial tennis courts provide Mamiit and Taino—Fil-Ams who reside outside the country—a special memory to boost their spirits.

MAMIIT

It was there at that court that they were finally warmly embraced by the Philippine public, who cheered them no end as they powered the Philippine team to a three-gold romp in the Manila Southeast Asian Games in Dec. 2005.

The host will face a decimated Pakistan squad which has been relegated to Group II after losing all its three ties last year.

The Filipinos are coming on strong in the hope of making the Group I for the first time since 1995. The country emerged from obscurity when it swept all five ties in Group III last year.

Mamiit and Taino, Southeast Asian Games gold medalists, are likely to be fielded in the opening singles to gauge the strength of the Pakistanis who will miss their top player due to injury.

Aisan Qureshi didn't join the team that reached World Group for the first time in 2005. Pakistan's Davis Cup run hit a snag against Chile and then spiraled into doldrums afterward.

"Right now I can say that we have a 70-30 chances of winning the tie," added Pathak. "Among other reasons is because Cecil is in top shape."

Mamiit, the Asian Games bronze winner, is currently ranked 190th in the world. He and Taino are eyeing the Beijing Olympics next year, but qualifying for the quadrennial meet requires players to be in the top 64 in the world. Taino is ranked 472nd in singles. *Marc Anthony Reyes*

Dandan patiently waits for his turn to serve

By Marc Anthony Reyes

AT THE SIDELINES OF THE DAVIS Cup practices of the Philippine squad, Kyle Joshua Dandan patiently waits for his turn to train with the likes of Fil-Ams Cecil Mamiit and Eric Taino.

The wait very much embodies his tennis career thus far.

Ranked 92nd in the world junior rankings, Dandan is unofficially the fifth guy of the country's Davis Cup squad. Countries participating in that prestigious tournament field four-man teams.

"I know that my time will come and I'm taking it slowly but surely," Dandan told the INQUIRER one afternoon at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

In the meantime, the 17-year-old netter is busy polishing his list of achievements by trying to book slots to Grand Slam events through ATP qualifying tournaments.

He has taken a crack at the Australian Open but lost in the first round of the qualifier because of a bad back. Up next in his schedule are the qualifiers for the French Open, the Wimbledon and the US Open.

And as tough as his goals may be, he isn't fazed. It is only by going the rough road that he is going to pile up points for his ATP ranking.

To sharpen his skills, he trains with the country's Davis Cup squad.

"Just training with these guys is enough for me for the mean time, because they just don't treat you as playing partner but they also act as coaches to me," Dandan said.

There is little hurry in his part to join the country's Davis Cup squad, also made up of PJ Tierro and Johnny Arcilla. He is one year past the chance to equal Felix Barrientos' feat as the youngest Filipino to make the team. Barrientos, a local legend in the sport, was 16 in his first Davis Cup duty for the country.

Dandan picked up the game as a 6-year-old kid influenced by his father, Nick, who is a club player. That influence has also spread to his youngest brother Ice, who is also competing in the 10-under tournaments.

He honed his skills at the International Tennis Academy in Florida last year.

Dandan, who finished his high school through home study, has already three ITF titles tucked under his belt, relying on his main weapon—powerful serves which he complements with booming forehands from the baseline.

"They said I have a strong forehand, but what I'm trying to improve on is how to get that mental toughness," admitted Dandan, who has yet to win a pick-up match with multititled veteran Arcilla.

"The good thing is that they share their knowledge to me," he added, referring to Southeast Asian Games gold medalists Mamiit and Taino.

And the tips he receives, the education he gets is making the wait worthwhile.

DANDAN: I know that my time will come and I'm taking it slowly but surely. RYAN LIM

Beach volley tourney begins today

ATENEO HOTSHOTS MISHA QUIMPO and Bea Pascual hope to complete the takeover of the young guns when the 2007 Petron Ladies Beach Volleyball Tournament blasts off today at the Clearwater Country Club in Clark Field in Pampanga.

Quimpo and Pascual made it as far as the semifinal round when they teamed up in the 2006 series' third leg last October and they are among the top contenders expected to contend for the title in the beach volleyball extravaganza, which is now on its fifth year.

The beach volleyball tilt offers P10,000 plus a trophy to the winning pair, while runners-up get P5,000 and a trophy.

More importantly, the top two placers automatically earn berths to the grand finals—a Battle of Champions-type of competition at the end of the year.

Organizer Tisha Abundo said that she expects a new set of beach volley queens to emerge in the first leg.

"While the veterans continue to stamp their mark, some of the new faces are slowly but surely carving a name for themselves," said Abundo.

Joining the fray in the fight for top honors are Quimpo and Pascual's fellow Ateneans Stephanie Palma and Rubie Ann Tangulo.

Former varsity standouts Iris Ortega, Kris Gepuela, Gel Gepuela and Marilou Bahil are also around with Olivarez College bets Rowena Felices and Roseanna Barroga posing enough of a threat.

MARIANNE Calleja, Mari Jane Christine Portia and Ma. Lourdes Patilano are among the top players of the beach volleyball competition. ERNIE U. SARMIENTO

Arellano University spikers Cherry Ferrer, Joy Basas and Mari Jane Portia will be there with Asian College of Science and Technology campaigners Marianne Calleja, Sheena Rose Teves and Lourdes Patilano.

The last time Quimpo and Pascual saw action, the duo went beyond expectations and managed to see action in the semis against eventual finalists Kat Villaluz and Arlene Bernardo. Michelle Laborte and her sister Sheryl eventually won the title in the series' final leg.

The Labortes won't join this edition of the meet, which will benefit the hotshot Ateneans in two ways. Not only is there one less pair to worry about, but more importantly, the champs have decided to coach the Lady Eagles.

Estrera-Bayron leads Minolta Pro-Am by 2

By Musong R. Castillo

SILANG, CAVITE—EDWIN ESTRERA and Jay Bayron played steady enough in the face of ultra-tough conditions yesterday, shooting a three-over par 74 for a two-shot lead after one round of the P1.7 million Konica Minolta Pro-Am.

The winds blew hard all day, making the formidable Langer layout of the Riviera here play even tougher as scores soared with the "four-peat"-seeking Gerard Cantada-JR Tanpinco combine shooting an 80 to trail by six.

Louie Dacudao, in only his second tournament as a pro after missing the cut in the recent Philippine Open, and partner Kevin Tayao fired a 76 to be in second spot.

Elmer Salvador and Korean partner Lee Tong-hwa shot a 77 for third spot with the teams of Ronnie Casas-Ferdinand Aunzo and Renato Casas -Gene Bondoc shooting identical 78s to be a further stroke back.

Mark Fernando, a standout of the National Caddies' Open program who is the amateur partner of businessman Tony Arevalo, shot an ace and could end up as the biggest winner in the tournament.

The Zamboanga native, a mainstay of Canlubang in the coming PAL Interclub, holed the 170-yard par-3 fourth hole using a Ping 9-iron for the Avanza, Toyota's latest passenger car worth close to P600,000.

Fernando gets to drive home the vehicle if no other player scores an ace for the rest of the tournament being backed by Grappa's, S-Yard, PBCom, MetroBank, Caffe Appassionato, Union Bank, Holcim, Equitable Bank, Okamura Furniture, MerryMaids, Terminix, Bravo Golf, Pagcor, Land Bank, Riso Copiers, Brother & Epson printers, Pivo Praha Pilsner, WWW.Express DHL, Metrostar and Rowell.

Arevalo-Fernando, though, were way behind in the leaderboard after struggling to a double bogey-littered 84, 10 strokes off. They would have to make a charge in the next two rounds to avoid being cut.

A 54-hole cut will leave only the top 30 scores and ties playing in the final day.

There were a total of 129 teams that teed off—the biggest since the event was revived in 2001—as play went on even at dusk.

DEFENDING champions Gerard Cantada (left) and JR Tanpinco struggle with the winds yesterday at the Riviera's Langer course. ROMY HOMILLADA

Shin paces Southern Ladies by 1

ILOILO—KOREAN CRYSTAL SHIN opened her bid for a second straight Southern Ladies golf crown with a two-over par 72 to post a one-point lead over reigning Philippine Amateur champion Carmelette Villaroman and Anya Tanpinco at the Iloilo Golf and Country Club here yesterday.

Shin, who beat Lora Roberto for the crown last year at Del Monte, bucked the strong winds to assemble 52 points under the Molave scoring system.

Villaroman and Tanpinco shot a pair of 51s or 73s in stroke play.

Dottie Ardina, the 13-year-old Junior World champion scored 50 points or 74, followed by Mia Piccio with 49 and Lina de Guzman (48). Lovelyn Guioguio, Regina de Guzman and Cyna Rodriguez turned in 47 points apiece. Crystal Superal made 45 points.

Meanwhile, the IGCCI-I squad of the host club composed of Maggie Rivera (38), Christine Popp (36) and Ann Zaragoza (32) carded a 106 aggregate to lead IGCCI-III team of Sofia Umadhay (36), Nitz Goto (34) and Leny Licera (34), which had 103, in the team championship played under the Stableford scoring format.

Ardina and Piccio scored 34 points while Rodriguez had 32 as NGAP/ICTSI-I settled for third with a 100 total. Chihiro Ikeda didn't count with a 28 in the four-to-play, three-to-count event.

Tanpinco had 36, Superal made 31 while Debbie de Villa came through with a 27 as NGAP/ICTSI-II fell 12 points off the pace with a 94.

In Class A, Maggie Rivera pooled 39 points and likewise took a one-point lead over Grace Superal while Christine Popp had 37 points for third. Sofia Umadhay showed the way in Class B with 31 points for a one-point lead over Maria Oliquino while Teresa Araneta had 25 points.

SPORTSWATCH

PCC hosts NCC 5-cocker today

THE NATIONAL COCKERS' ASSOCIATION WILL HOLD ANOTHER ONE OF ITS blockbuster derbies today at the Pasay City Cockpit. The 5-cock derby will be hosted by chair Rudy Albano and P Berin. Competing are former Sen. Ramon Revilla, Rep. Iggy Arroyo, Manny Pacquiao, Manolo Lopez, Gov. Ito Ynares, Sec. Ronnie Puno, Jun Santiago, Edwin Abella, Boy Jiao, chair Rudy Albano, Danding Cojuangco, Fiscal Villanueva, brothers Eddie and Boboy Araneta, Patrick Antonio, brothers Raffy and Mauro Prieto, JV Magsaysay, Baby Asistio, Johnnny Jalandoni, Charing Magbushos, Larry Mendoza, Joey Sarasola, Jun Marasigan, Bebot Uy, Edwin Javelosa, Randy Peralta, Jerry Barias, Tony Marfori, Johnny Lagbas, William Go, James Uy and Essie Mallillin. Also joining are P. Berin, Efren Canlas, Mario Villamor, Jun and Rudy Jingco, Jet Fernando, Madlangbayan Brothers, Art Sevilla, Edwin Santos, Bebot Villar, Tony Lasalla, Benjie Lim, Paul Estrellado, Michael Co, Lando Celebre, Edgar Santos, Rey Briones, Boyet Joson, Ellan Nagano, Ricky Valencia, Jerry Ramos, Tony Open, Eric dela Rosa, Louie Cua, Boy Royo, Nestor Mercado, Lito Orillaza and Rudy Salud.

Rambulan starts at Mabuhay Cockpit

THE 10.5 M NATIONAL RAMBULAN 8-COCK DERBY, A NATIONWIDE COCK-fight series to be participated in by 23 cockpits and sports centers, starts on Feb. 27 at Mabuhay Cockpit Arena in San Fernando, Pampanga. Lead organizers Rodolfo Pineda and Butch Nunez of San Juan Coliseum will supervise the 2- cock eliminations at Mabuhay Cockpit which will be participated in by 50 derbyists of Metro Manila and Central Luzon. Other schedules will be on March 1, 3 and 5 (first batch) at SJC; March 2 (Isabela Breeders Cockpit); Feb. 8, March 1 and 3 (San Luis Sports Complex, Eastern Samar); March 6, 9 and 12 (Pangasinan Coliseum); March 9 (Solana Cockpit Arena); March 15 (Dictado Mega Cockpit. For an entry fee of P11,000, a staggering guaranteed prize of P10.5 million awaits the winners. The finals will be held in April at San Juan Coliseum. For inquiries, call 725 -5369 and 725 -6563 or 0917 -8041691 (Maricar).

50 bets enter Makati derby finals

FIFTY LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL COCKERS QUALIFIED FOR THE CHAMPIonship round tomorrow of Makati Coliseum's first-ever Makati International 8 -Cock Super derby. The total guaranteed prize is a hefty P5 million. The 4- cock finale starts at 4 p.m. with more than 100 fights, said hosts Lito Orillaza, Rudy Salud and William Co of WTJ Sports and Amusement Corp. "Please be reminded that weight limits for tomorrow's event will be from 1.9 kg to 2.5 kg only," Orillaza said. For inquiries, call 896 -3545 and 895- 6475.

80 fights lined up at LPC today

LEADING COCKERS OF METRO MANILA COLLIDE WITH HACKFIGHT ENTHUSIasts of Cavite and Laguna today as the popular Fastest Win One-Cock Timbangan fires off at Las Pinas Coliseum beginning at noon. The fastest win champion will be declared after every ten fights, and shall receive a guaranteed prize of P15,000. Likewise, the overall fastest win champ will get a refrigerator as bonus while the second placer gets a washing machine. Hosts Rocky Mike and Julius Canumay pegged the entry fee at P1,100. Meanwhile, Vice Mayor Ruben Taguba and Baldo Perez will jointly promote a 3- cock event on Saturday with P250,000 on the line. LPC's Sunday Pintakasi is scheduled on Feb. 11. For inquiries: 873 -1040.

Away Kalipay sa Talisay Feb. 19-24

THE 3M AWAY KALIPAY SA TALISAY 6-COCK DERBY DERBY WILL BE HELD AT the New Talisay Tourist & Sports Complex in Talisay City from Feb. 19 – 24. It is hosted by Thunderbird's corporate model engineer Sonny Lagon with Robert Yu and Ricoh. At stake is a cash prize of P3 million or more with the entry pegged at P18,000 and minimum bet P3,300. The first 3-cock eliminations will be held on Feb. 19; the second on Feb. 20; the third on Feb. 21 and the fourth and last on Feb. 22. The finals will be held Feb. 24. Supporting the event is the Central Visayas Breeders Association headed by Victor Sierra. For details, call 0917-7201111.

QUEZON City majority leader Councilor Ariel Inton (2nd from left), with his chief of staff Noemi Enrile Chan, Solar Sports marketing manager Eric Centeno and Rocketman Enterprises chief Ramon Tuason.

RACING TIPS

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Bingbong (2), Exploiter 93), Yankee Clipper (6), Terry Toon (1)

Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Showgirl (7), Hurry Princess (5), Gen-Gen Spirit (6), La Truena (3), Hurry My Love (9)

Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Itza Lemon (4), Sports Illustrated (3), Raind Dancer/Royal Fleet (6), Love A Trick (7)

Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Joker (3), Odyssey (10), Sweet Talk (7), Iron Tower (2), King's Choice (9)

Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Dancing Queen/Kawiliwili (1), El Cid (3), Lovable Trisha (4), Cuadro De Alas (6)

Race 6—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Sacred Hall (6), Classic Appeal (9), Angel of Light (3), Mindpower Miss (2), Gin Dancer (5)

Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Lucky Punch 93), Real Tough (6), D As In Dixie (2), Mulligan (5), Miss Victory (4)

Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Freedom Charger (4), Batang Westside (6), Classy Pages (7), Ayan Na Ko (10), BMJ Baby (3), Crystal City (9)

NBC targets bigger, better season with new partners

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—THE National Basketball Conference (NBC) board of team owners looks forward to a bigger, better season with more teams and partners in tow.

The NBC's new television partner Solar-Basketball TV and marketing arm Waffle Marketing presented their plans for the coming fourth season of the country's premier regional league in a recent meeting attended by team representatives at the Dynasty Court Hotel here.

Rely San Agustin, Solar-BTV marketing manager, and Waffle's Auty Villarama and Peeya delos Reyes said NBC scored big in terms of media exposure.

"We are very excited to have NBC as part of the Basketball TV lineup," said San Agustin. "We believe in the league's regional concept and all efforts should be focused on taking NBC to a higher level."

NBC secretary general Tito Palma, who represented president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, is confident that the league will grow with its new partners.

"Solar-BTV is the top basketball channel here," said Palma. "We're honored and inspired to be part of their show. With Waffle Marketing's vast experience, we'll never go wrong."

Solar-BTV will air NBC's "game of the week" while other games will be shown on cable's Viva Prime Channel.

During the meeting, the board discussed preparations for the grand opening on March 10 at the Quezon Convention Center in Lucena City.

Among those who graced the meeting were Pagadian Explorers' Rocky Chan and Joseph Sapong, Montana-Davao's Helino Abrahan Jr. and head coach Dodong Cagampan, Iligan Crusaders' Crisie Perfecto, Valencia Golden Harvest's Rico Ocho, MP-Pacman Gensan's Lito de los Reyes, Villa Anita-Quezon's Robin Mendoza and head coach Angel Vergeire and Tagaytay Spring's Pat Pello.

Iloilo, Tribu Sugbu and grand slam champion Ozamiz failed to send their men but gave assurance of their participation in the coming tourney and other slated tournaments.

Unified cage body

Meanwhile, Padilla bared the NBC's full support to the unified Basketball Association of the Philippines (BAP)-Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas (SBP).

"We are happy with this development (unification), said Padilla, the 42-year-old national pistol champion since 1978. "All our members expect the new BAP-SBP leadership to further strengthen basketball in the country."

Rivera joins World Tenpin Masters

FILIPINO BIBOY RIVERA WAS among the 16 top male bowlers from around the world who will be seeing action in the 2007 World Tenpin Masters set April 20 to 22 at the Barnsley Metrodome, England.

Rivera, a 2006 Athlete of the Year awardee, and defending champion Chris Barnes of the United States were among those chosen by Matchroom Sport to compete in the event staking a record purse of $70,000 (nearly P3.5 million).

Former European No. 1 Paul Moor of England is also in the fold.

Rivera, gold medalist in the 2006 Men's World Championships in Busan, Korea, is now in the middle of preparation for the event.

Norway's Tore Torgersen, who has won the competition three times, 2005 champion Jens Nickel (Germany), Asia's No. 1 Remy Ong (Singapore) are also in the roster.

Completing the field are Diandra Asbaty (United States), Dominic Barrett (England), Jason Belmonte (Australia), Guy Caminsky (South Africa), Darren Cundy (England) (PTBC Masters champion), Badra El Sheik (Saudi Arabia), Zara Glover (England), Alex Liew (Malaysia), Osku Palermaa (Finland) and Michael Schmidt (Canada).

Whoever wins the competition will get $30,000, the runner-up $10,000, beaten semifinalists $5,000 and losing quarterfinalists $2,000. The first round losers will get $1,500 each. *Marlon Bernardino, Contributor*

RIVERA: Lone RP bet

QC gov't backs Yang-Orcollo encounter

THE QUEZON CITY GOVERNMENT, LED BY Mayor Sonny Belmonte, has thrown its support to the "Golden Pool Classic presents: Dennis Orcollo vs Yang Ching-shun–it's all about the money ... and more" on April 13 to 15 at the Gateway Mall in Cubao, Quezon City.

The race to 60 showdown between Filipino hotshot Orcollo and Taiwanese ace Yang has already spurred enthusiasm among billiards aficionados.

"We in the Quezon City government, led by our sports-loving chief executive (Belmonte) and the City Council, have decided to support this project as we believe that it will be a big help in continuing the development of one of the most played sports in the country," said Quezon City Council Majority Leader Ariel Inton.

"This is our humble way of supporting not just billiards but the whole sports, which is one of our administration's priority programs," added Inton, a well known sports advocate.

The Orcollo-Yang marathon match is deemed to be a battle for the unofficial world's "money-game king" title.

The event, co-organized by Bugsy Promotions of Perry Mariano, and the Rocketman Enterprises of Ramon Tuason, and to be produced by Solar Sports, was originally scheduled on April 20 to 22 but was moved to an earlier date so as not to run into conflict with the opening leg of the Guinness Asian 9-Ball Tour in Jakarta .

"It was risky to move an event to an earlier date, but it was made easy with the support we got from the Quezon City government and Solar Sports," said Mariano. "With them, we have no doubt that this will be a successful undertaking."

"It's all systems go, things are in place we are all excited to start this event," added Tuason.

Besides the claim of being the best in money game, Orcollo and Yang will also dispute the $10,000 (around P490,000) at stake in the contest. *Marlon Bernardino*

SPORTS

Pistons hand Celtics 15th straight defeat

AUBURN HILLS, MICHIGAN—CHAUNCEY BILLUPS scored 24 points and Antonio McDyess added 18 in just 20 minutes to help the Detroit Pistons hand the Boston Celtics their 15th straight loss, 109-102, on Tuesday.

The Celtics, who extended the worst losing streak in franchise history, haven't won since a 128-119 victory in Memphis on Jan. 5. They have allowed at least 100 points in five straight games.

Boston also had to send forward Paul Pierce home with an infected left elbow. Pierce, who has missed Boston's last 23 games with a foot injury, is expected to be hospitalized for at least two days, which will push his possible return back past the All-Star break.

At New York, Stephon Marbury scored 12 of his 15 points in an early second-half run that overwhelmed the Los Angeles Clippers, 102-90, and turned the game around for New York.

Jamal Crawford and Eddy Curry each scored 23 points to lead New York, which shot poorly and defended worse in the first two quarters before controlling the second half of its second consecutive victory.

Elton Brand had 22 points and 13 rebounds for the Clippers, who lost for the third time in 10 games and fell to 1-2 on their seven-game Eastern trip. Reserve Tim Thomas also had 22 points.

At Memphis, Tennessee, Tracy McGrady scored 33 points and had eight assists to lead Houston over Memphis, 98-90.

Houston won for the sixth time in the last seven games while Memphis, which has the worst record in the NBA, has lost three straight.

Pau Gasol led Memphis with 30 points and 13 rebounds.

At Milwaukee, Ruben Patterson scored 14 of his 27 points in the fourth quarter and struggling Milwaukee beat Orlando, 116-111, to snap a four-game losing streak.

The Bucks won their seventh straight at home against the Magic but have still lost 15 of their last 18 games overall, in part because Michael Redd remains sidelined with a sprained left knee.

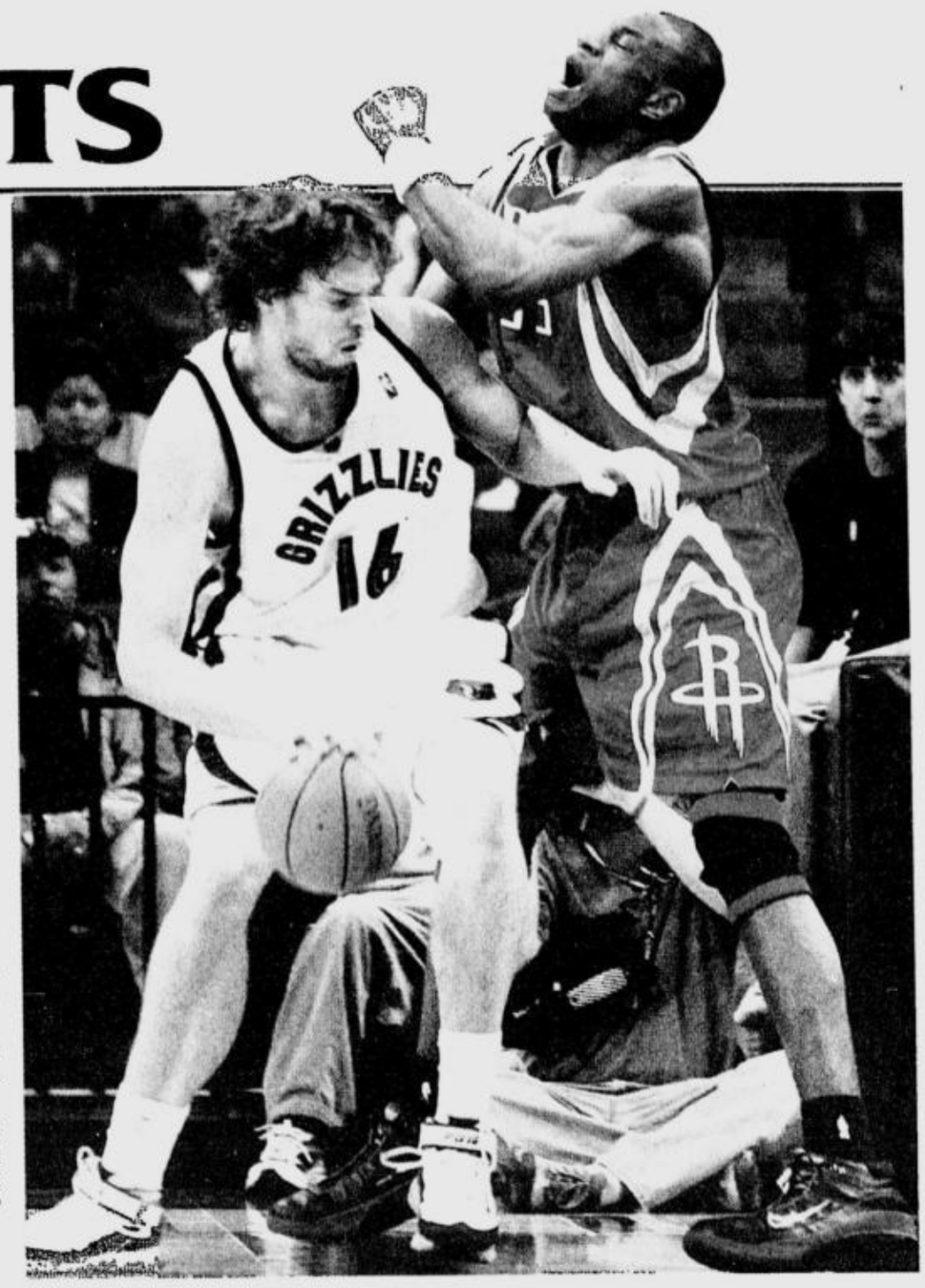
Earl Boykins had 24 points, Charlie Villaneuva 22 and Charlie Bell 20 for the Bucks.

Dwight Howard had 21 points and 11 rebounds for the Magic, his 34th double-double of the season.

At Portland, Oregon, Amare Stoudemire scored 36 points and Leandro Barbosa added 23 of his 25 after halftime to power Phoenix over Portland, 109-102, in overtime.

Phoenix was missing two-time MVP Steve Nash, who sat out with a shoulder injury.

Stoudemire scored the first five points of the extra period and Barbosa knocked in back-to-back 3-pointers as the Suns held off the Blazers. *AP*



MEMPHIS Grizzlies' Pau Gasol (right) collides with Houston Rockets' Dikembe Mutombo. REUTERS

Shoulder injury derails Nash

PORTLAND, OREGON—PHOENIX guard Steve Nash, the National Basketball Association's Most Valuable Player in the past two seasons, will be sidelined indefinitely with an inflamed right shoulder, the team said Tuesday.

Nash, whose absence began on Tuesday with a game here in Portland, aggravated the injury in the first half of the Suns' 113-108 victory on Monday at Denver and did not play in the second half.

The Suns did not specify when Nash might return to action but the idea of benching the Canadian star now was to prevent a long-term absence from a team that is 38-10 chasing Dallas for the NBA's best record and a home-court edge in the Western Conference playoffs.

NASH: It's just hurting. REUTERS

"I'm not very mobile right now. It's just hurting," Nash said. "When I was sitting on the sideline, it was hurting."

Phoenix coach Mike D'Antoni was looking out for Nash's health by yanking him late in the second quarter at Denver.

"When he pulled me out at the end of the half, I said I wanted to keep going. He said it's not worth it right now, so I decided he was right and not to risk it long-term," Nash said.

Swingman Eric Piatkowski will take his place on the active roster but it will be Brazil's Leandro Barbosa and Marcus Banks who replace Nash at point guard.

Barbosa, who can play both backcourt spots, is averaging 16.4 points and 4.0 assists a game. *AFP*

40,000 fans praise Colts

INDIANAPOLIS—ABOUT 40,000 INDIANAPOlis fans showed up to thank the Colts for their Super Bowl victory and all the players wanted to do was praise their boisterous supporters.

A frenzied crowd descended on downtown Indianapolis and filed into the RCA Dome for a homecoming rally on Monday night to celebrate the Colts' 29-17 victory over the Chicago Bears in the NFL championship. The fans chanted "dee-fense, dee-fense" and basked in the city's first major pro sports title in more than 30 years.

"This is remarkable," tight end Dallas Clark said. "I didn't know Indianapolis had this many people. You guys are the greatest."

The Colts, who finally found a defense in the playoffs to complement quarterback Peyton Manning's potent offense, returned to Indianapolis late Monday afternoon, stopped off at their training facility and boarded buses for a trip back downtown and a frigid, bone-numbing parade to the Dome.

Most of the fans waited inside the Dome, although hundreds went back out onto the streets as the parade approached. Many of them shared triumphant shouts and high-fives with the players who were riding atop the slow-moving trucks and floats.

Inside, the fans were just as loud as they were when the Colts left two weeks earlier with the AFC championship. *AP*

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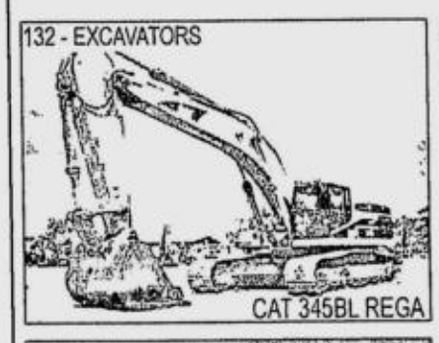

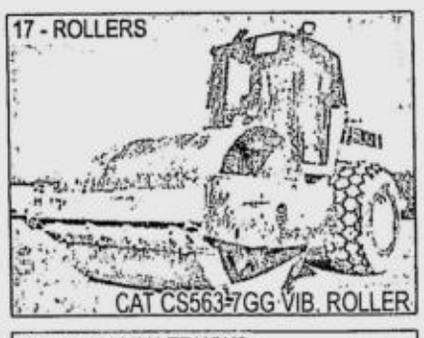

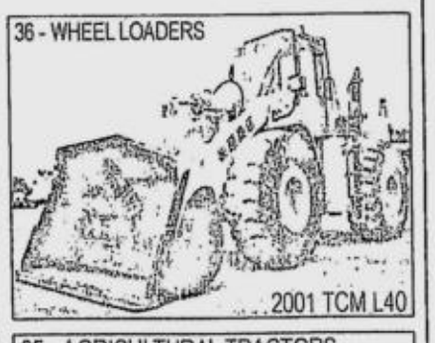

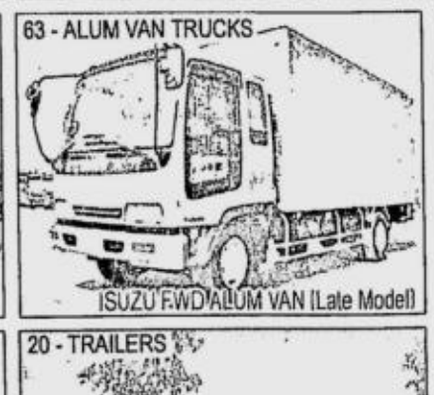

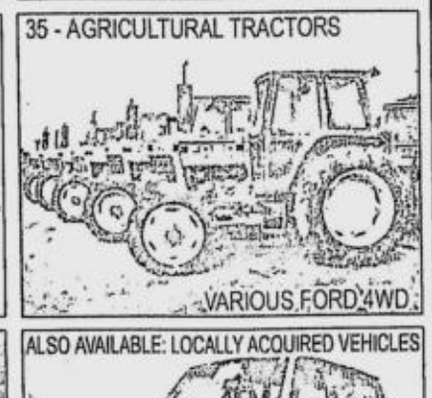

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Swiss ready to face Spain sans world No. 1 Federer

GENEVA—SWITZERLAND'S Davis Cup team say they are ready to make life difficult for Spain this weekend, despite going into their World Group first-round encounter without the services of Roger Federer.

The world number one is once again skipping the competition's opening round to concentrate on his own flourishing career, leaving compatriots Stanislas Wawrinka, Marco Chiudinelli, Yves Allegro and Stephane Bohli to take on a powerful Spanish team led by world number two Rafael Nadal.

"Having the world number one playing for us would of course be a big advantage," Switzerland captain Severin Luethi said on Tuesday. "Without Federer, the Spanish are going to start as clear favourites, especially when you look at their rankings.

FEDERER AP

"But we have seen many times that anything is possible in the Davis Cup. We have home advantage, the choice of playing surface and a Swiss crowd behind us so I'm sure it won't be easy for Spain this weekend." Wawrinka, ranked 32nd in the world, will carry the weight of his country's expectations against the three-times Davis Cup champions.

If the tie has not been decided by Saturday, Wawrinka could face a crunch meeting with Nadal on Sunday— just three weeks after losing 6-2 6-2 6-2 to the Spaniard in the third round of the Australian Open.

Unlike Wawrinka, Swiss doubles specialist Yves Allegro has recent history on his side, having paired up with France's Fabrice Santoro last week to beat Feliciano Lopez and Fernando Verdasco in the first round of the Zagreb ATP event. *Reuters*

Puerto Princesa hosts Milo qualifier Sunday

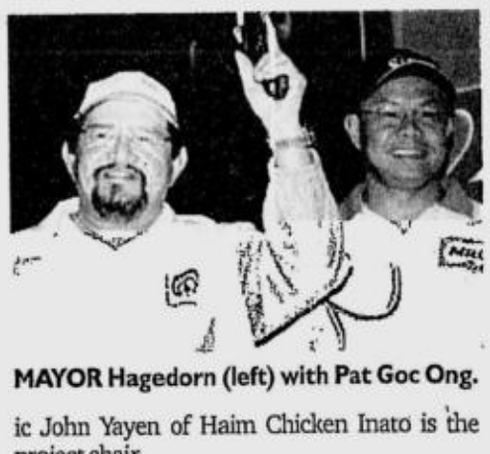
PUERTO PRINCESA—LOCAL RUNNERS and reigning titlists Ruben Samuya and Maricris Laipan are again tagged as the favorites when the National Milo Marathon returns to this clean, green and serene city on Sunday.

The top three finishers in the men's and women's divisions of the 21K elimination run here will advance to the 42K Milo Marathon national finals slated on Nov. 18 in Metro Manila.

Puerto Princesa City Mayor Edward Hagedorn has been invited to fire the starting gun at 6 a.m. at the Mendoza Park. Also invited to grace the occasion and award the prizes is Vice Mayor Cecil Bayron.

Now on its 31st season, the annual foot race, held in partnership with Bayview Park Hotel-Manila, is expected to attract 6,000 runners in the 3K event for kids, 5K fun run and the centerpiece 21K qualifying race.

Organizing the elimination run here is the Palawan Chamber of Commerce and Industry headed by engineer Armando R. Lustre, Jr. Eric John Yayen of Haim Chicken Inato is the project chair.



MAYOR Hagedorn (left) with Pat Goc Ong.

Another feature of the early morning festivities is the cheer-dance competition.

Milo Sports Events Executive Pat Goc-ong is advising all runners to be at the starting area early for the pre-race briefing and check-in.

More than P159,000 in cash purse as well as trophies and medals are at stake for the top 10 finishers in each racing event.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2007

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

B I

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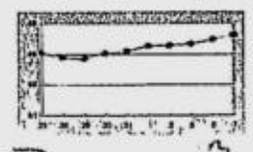


₱ 48.365 = $ 1

As of 5 p.m., Feb. 7, 2007

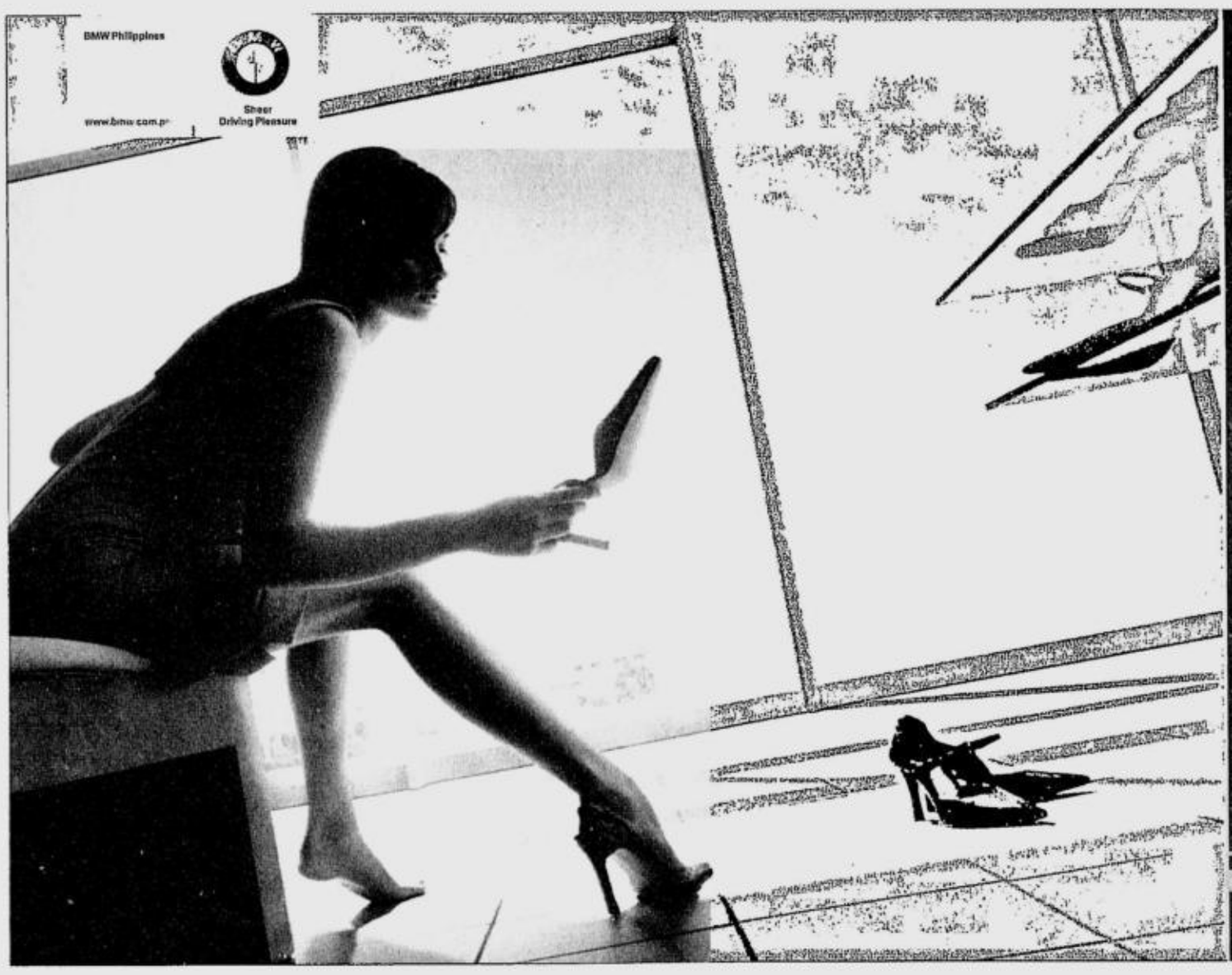
Peso climbs to 48.365 to $1

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PESO YESTERDAY CLIMBED TO A NEW SIX-YEAR high of 48.355 before closing at 48.365 to the dollar as offshore investors snapped up local government bonds on expectations that a new P50-billion local bond swap would shore up trading gains.

Most other Asian currencies also firmed up against the dollar in offshore markets yesterday, triggered by speculations that the Bank of Japan would soon raise interest rates to address the yen's weakness.

PESO/ B2



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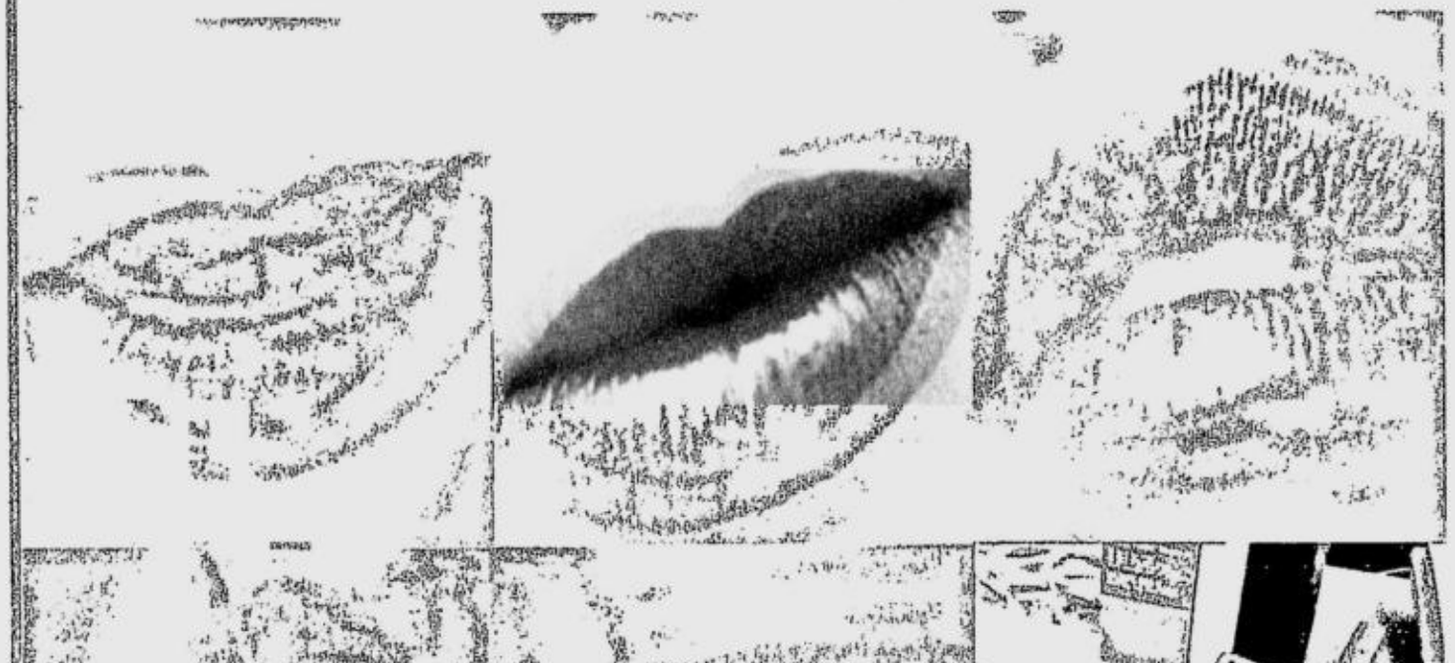

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A new Mobile Instant Messenger.

I downloaded the application direct on my Mobile Phone. I just typed www.yehba.com on my WAP browser, then I automatically got the application

The Installation was fast, it was easy!
Imagine an application that hosts Yahoo! Messenger, Google Talk and MSN Messenger in one.
But wait, it doesn't end there, there are so many services that I can use overtime!

Sobrang ganda nito Honey!
Ngayon kahit nasa abroad ka, iye YehBA* na lang kita!
Para kahit wala akong computer, pwede na tayong mag chat!

Honey, download ka na rin ng YehBA* ha!
Mwah, mwah, mwah! Luv you Honey!
Nga pala! Pwde ka ba tumawag sa YehBA*, 02 – 8174157..

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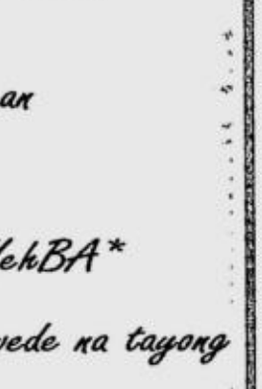
Luv,
Cupcake ;)



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Stocks close lower on profit-taking

SHARE PRICES CLOSED 1.21-PERCENT LOWER yesterday with investors taking profits after the market recently hit its highest level in nearly a decade, dealers said.

They said such a correction was to be expected and positive as it would allow investors to pocket some profits and then come back in.

The composite index fell 39.58 points at 3,232.39 after trading between 3,231.45 and 3,284.95.

The broader all-share index fell 20.89 points to 2,040.29.

Losers led gainers 68 to 41, with 61 stocks unchanged.

Volume was 3.7 billion shares worth P3.8 billion.

"The downturn is part of a healthy breather pending further revalidation of growth expectations of companies for 2007 based on results for last year," said Grace Cerdenia at online securities firm 2TradeAsia.

Cerdenia said market players were also waiting for the main index to retreat toward the 3,000 support level before coming back to test the 3,300 points level that was breached Tuesday.

"Some fund managers are starting to cash in on stocks that surged extensively and many are still waiting to position on good support levels before buying again," she said.

"We may also see some portfolio repositioning in sectors that will benefit most in the run-up to the May elections like energy, infrastructure and select property stocks, and those which have breached overbought territory."

Philippine Long Distance Telephone led the losers, falling P30 at P2,530.

PLDT chair Manuel Pangilinan earlier said that the company was likely to post net profit of P35 billion for 2006 if it could sell its mobile satellite business.

PLDT rival Globe Telecom lost P20 to P1,385.

Property firms were also down with Ayala Land falling 50 centavos to P16.75, Filinvest Land off two centavos to P1.80 and Megaworld losing 10 centavos to P2.65. *AFP*

Peso climbs to 48.365 to $1

From page B1

At the Philippine Dealing System yesterday, the peso gained another 14 centavos from Tuesday's finish of 48.505:$1. The local currency is now trading at its strongest level since touching 48.27:$1 on March 15, 2001.

With heavy foreign inflows, volume at the spot foreign exchange market also surged to $768 million from Tuesday's $524.20 million.

"There are foreign inflows from investors who are buying into fixed-income securities. They are expecting a good play following a new bond swap announced by the Bureau of the Treasury," said Chinatrust (Philippines) Commercial Bank treasurer Roland Avante.

Avante said the outlook remained favorable for the peso but the foreign exchange market would first likely consolidate within the 48.50-48.60:$1 range over the short term.

But after breaking past the 48.50 barrier, the next dollar support level is expected by many traders at 48.30.

The Treasury launched on Tuesday a domestic bond swap offer with a minimum issue size of P30 billion in three-year bonds and P20 billion in five-year paper. The bond exchange offer is part of a debt-consolidation program that the government started last year to enhance trading liquidity for key maturity benchmarks.

"At the end of the day, the market believes the swap opens up a positive play at capital appreciation," Avante said.

With the downtrend in inflation and a cash-rich financial system, Avante said the market was projecting some more easing of local interest rates, thereby raising the potential for bondholders' capital appreciation.

The Bangko Sentral also reporter yesterday that the country's gross international reserves hit a new historic high of $23.76 billion in end-January on strong foreign inflows from the government's recent $1 billion global bond foray.

This was $790 million higher than the end-December level of $22.97 billion.

"Robust foreign exchange inflows continued during the month, on the back of strong market confidence that has been sustained by the improving macroeconomic fundamentals," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday. "In particular, the rise in reserves was due in part to the national government's deposit of the proceeds from its $1-billion global bond issue, which was well-received by local and foreign investors."

The GIR, a key indicator of ability to service the foreign exchange requirements of the economy, consists of the BSP's gross foreign currency holdings, gold reserves, foreign investments and special drawing rights from multilateral institutions like the International Monetary Fund.

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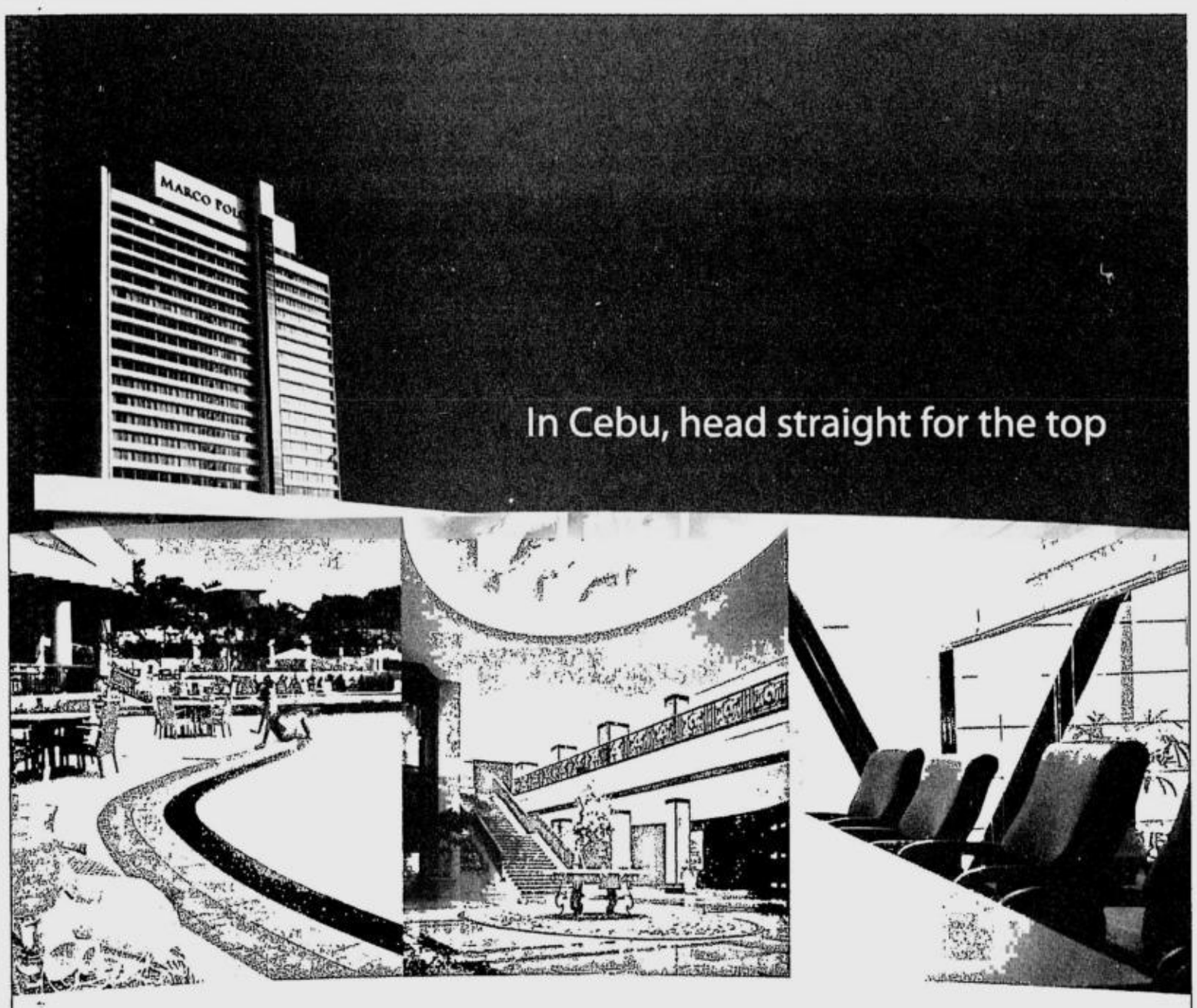

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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of February 7, 2007)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	8	8.4	7.9	8.2	500,000
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	54.5	54.5	53.5	53.5	299,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	71.5	71.5	71	71	667,000
China Banking Corp.	745	750	745	750	1,130
Citystate Savings Bank	19.75	19.75	19.75	19.75	300
Export and Ind. Bank A	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	3,370,000
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	97	97	95	96	127,100
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	61	61	60	60.5	2,607,600
Phil. Bank of Comm. A	50.5	50.5	50	50	2,200
Philippine National Bank	47	48.5	47	48	87,300
Phil. Savings Bank	56	56	56	56	1,100
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	44.5	44.5	42.5	43	431,400
Security Bank Corp.	78	78.5	77.5	77.5	462,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	63	63	62	62	16,600
OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
ATR Kimeng Fin. Corp.	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	13,000
Bankard Inc.	0.68	0.68	0.68	0.68	100,000
Citiseconline.Com Inc.	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	153,000
Filipino Fund Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.3	5.3	4,000
First Metro Invest. Corp.	31	32	31	32	9,200
Manulife Financial Corp.	1645	1650	1645	1650	930
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.72	1.94	1.72	1.94	1,141,000
Phil. Stock Exchange Inc.	487.5	490	487.5	487.5	180,150
Sun Life Financial Inc.	2070	2070	2070	2070	310
Ivantage Corp.	1.64	1.68	1.64	1.66	4,125,000
ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
PNOC Energy Dev. Corp.	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.4	30,999,000
First Gen Corp.	58	58	57	57.5	1,289,300
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	76	76	74.5	74.5	1,054,500
Manila Electric Co. A	71.5	72	71	71.5	89,100
Manila Electric Co. B	71.5	72.5	71.5	72	929,700
Manila Water Co. Inc.	9.9	10	9.8	9.9	11,769,000
Petron Corp.	4.65	4.7	4.6	4.65	8,053,000
Salcon Power Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.78	1.78	1,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	1.24	1.3	1.24	1.26	4,611,000
FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	5,000
CADP Group Corp.	2.02	2.02	2.02	2.02	2,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	66,100
Jollibee Foods Corp.	44	44	43.5	43.5	542,500
RFM Corp.	1.42	1.42	1.38	1.38	670,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.75	2.75	230,000
Swift Food Inc.	0.45	0.46	0.44	0.46	1,000,000
San Miguel Corp. A	64	64.5	64	64.5	119,400
San Miguel Corp. B	78.5	78.5	77.5	78.5	288,100
Alliance Tuna Int'l. Inc.	2.06	2.06	2.02	2.04	480,000
Universal Robina Corp.	18.5	18.5	18	18.5	3,793,100
CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
Southeast Asian Cement	1.44	1.48	1.4	1.46	51,428,000
Engineering Equip. Inc.	4.8	4.8	4.65	4.65	235,000
Fortune Cement Corp.	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.4	70,000
Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8.1	8	8.1	545,000
Phil Nat'l Const. Corp.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	1,000
Republic Cement Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.3	5.3	138,000
CHEMICALS					
Chemrez Technologies Inc.	5.2	5.2	5	5.1	718,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	10,000
DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
Active Alliance Inc.	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	20,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.28	0.29	0.27	0.28	19,790,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	381,000,000
Abacus Con Res & Hdg B	0.011	0.013	0.011	0.012	36,800,000
Ayala Corp.	660	660	630	650	117,160
Alsons Cons. Res. Inc.	0.68	0.69	0.68	0.69	320,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	8.1	8.1	7.8	7.9	13,998,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	9.7	9.7	8.7	9.1	5,220,000
AJO Net Holdings, Inc.	0.0675	0.07	0.065	0.065	22,700,000
A. Soriano Corp.	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	294,000
APC Group Inc.	0.4	0.41	0.39	0.41	14,450,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.013	0.014	0.013	0.013	32,800,000
Anglo Phil Holdings Corp.	1.24	1.24	1.18	1.22	5,557,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.62	1.62	1.62	1.62	52,000
PAL Holdings Inc.	3.55	3.6	3.55	3.55	215,000
Balabac Resources & Hldgs	1.22	1.24	1.22	1.24	118,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	26,200
Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.15	3.25	37,889,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.4	1,917,000
Filinvest Dev Corp.	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.2	2,166,000
F&J Prince Holdings Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	3,000
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	380,000
House of Investments Inc.	3.4	3.5	3.35	3.35	65,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	11.75	11.75	11.75	11.75	547,000
Medco Holdings	0.38	0.38	0.37	0.37	1,050,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.37	0.37	0.35	0.35	210,000
Magnum Holdings Inc.	5.1	5.8	5.1	5.7	4,397,000
Multitech Inv. Corp.	1.92	2.04	1.92	2.02	7,554,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.195	0.205	0.195	0.205	3,970,000
Republic Glass Hldg. Corp.	1.58	1.58	1.58	1.58	2,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.72	0.72	0.72	0.72	180,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.16	0.165	0.16	0.165	8,800,000
SM Investments Corp.	392.5	395	390	390	135,320
South China Resources Inc.	1.08	1.1	1.08	1.08	332,000
Seafront Resources Corp.	1.66	1.66	1.66	1.66	48,000
Wellex Industries Inc.	0.145	0.155	0.145	0.15	5,820,000
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	17	17.25	16.75	16.75	11,158,600
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	200,000
Belle Corp.	1.28	1.28	1.24	1.26	10,163,000
A. Brown Co. Inc.	1.48	1.48	1.4	1.4	2,663,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.47	0.47	0.47	0.47	120,000
Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	140,000
C&P Homes Inc.	1.96	1.96	1.96	1.96	130,000
Cebu Prop. Vent. A	1.76	1.76	1.76	1.76	40,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	890,000
Eib Realty Developers Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	110,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.75	0.77	0.74	0.74	57,170,000
Edsa Prop. Holdings Inc.	1.64	1.64	1.64	1.64	200,000
Ever-Gotesco Resources	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	2,500,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.82	1.86	1.8	1.8	309,285,000
Highlands Prime Inc.	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.9	101,000
Interport Res.	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.0095	60,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	17,000,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.51	0.51	0.5	0.51	5,140,000
City & Land Developers	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	15,000
Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.83	0.85	0.83	0.85	7,570,000
Megaworld Corp.	2.75	2.75	2.6	2.65	74,943,000
Metro Pacific Inv. Corp.	4.9	4.95	4.9	4.9	123,000
MRC Allied Ind. Inc.	0.36	0.36	0.36	0.36	100,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.19	1,540,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.5	1,951,800
Phil Realty and Holdings	0.67	0.67	0.65	0.65	3,920,000
SM Development Corp.	3.65	3.65	3.55	3.6	1,648,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	7,398,100
Suntrust Home Dev. Inc.	0.6	0.64	0.6	0.62	1,440,000
Uniwide Holdings, Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	100,000
MEDIA					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	23.25	23.25	23.25	23.25	39,500
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1.02	1.02	40,000
TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	2	2	1.96	1.96	15,466,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	1405	1405	1375	1385	69,330
Philpino Tel. Corp.	7.2	7.2	6.9	7	4,023,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	2600	2600	2530	2530	183,220
INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.35	0.35	0.33	0.33	19,270,000
Diversified Fin. Network	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	20,000
Imperial Res.	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	20,500,000
Ionics Inc.	2.65	2.65	2.6	2.65	88,000
IPVG Corp.	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.35	2,441,000
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.055	0.055	0.055	0.055	400,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.0575	0.06	0.0575	0.06	3,500,000
Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.34	1.34	100,000
Transpacific Broadband	2.3	2.36	2.3	2.34	184,000
Philweb Corp.	0.036	0.037	0.036	0.037	363,800,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Asian Terminals Inc.	4.05	4.05	4	4	60,000
Aboitiz Trans. Sys. Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	59,000
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	25	25	24.75	24.75	455,000
Keppel Phils. Marine Inc.	1	1	0.99	1	460,000
HOTEL & LEISURE					
Leisure & Resorts Corp.	2.24	2.24	2.18	2.22	2,622,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.7	0.82	0.7	0.8	9,080,000
EDUCATION					
Centro Escolar University	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.3	5,000
Ipeople Inc.	3.15	3.2	3.15	3.2	54,000
DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
Macroasia Corp.	2.16	2.2	2.14	2.18	938,000
Paxys Inc.	24.25	24.25	23.75	24	1,241,400
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	31	40	30	40	474,000
Philcomsat Holdings Corp.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	70,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	5.5	5.6	5.3	5.4	102,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	5.6	5.7	5.5	5.6	273,000
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.011	0.012	0.011	0.012	138,700,000
Atlas Cons. Min & Dev't	9.6	9.6	9.3	9.3	583,000
Benguet Corp. A	12	12	11.75	11.75	94,500
Geograce Res. Phil., Inc.	0.88	0.96	0.88	0.95	216,720,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	1,570,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	1,410,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.025	0.026	0.025	0.025	217,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.029	0.029	0.028	0.028	42,500,000
Omico Corp.	0.012	0.013	0.012	0.013	231,500,000
Philex Mining Corp.	4	4	3.95	4	1,840,000
Semirara Mining Corp.	18	18.5	18	18	51,800
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.79	0.79	0.77	0.77	1,210,000
Vulcan Ind'l	1.5	1.5	1.48	1.5	942,000
OIL					
Basic Petroleum Corp.	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.29	3,210,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	892,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	100,000
The Philodrill Corp.	0.012	0.012	0.012	0.012	264,500,000
Petroenergy Res. Corp.	10.25	10.25	10	10.25	228,400

CURRENCIES

February 7, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.770119	1.000000	48.5650
Japan	Yen	0.006412	0.008326	0.4044
United Kingdom	Pound	1.517982	1.971100	95.7265
Hongkong	Dollar	0.098625	0.128064	6.2194
Switzerland	Franc	0.621014	0.806387	39.1622
Canada	Dollar	0.651429	0.845881	41.0802
Singapore	Dollar	0.502656	0.652699	31.6983
Australia	Dollar	0.598012	0.776518	37.7116
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.042866	2.652661	128.8265
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.205343	0.266638	12.9493
Brunei	Dollar	0.501021	0.650576	31.5952
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000085	0.000111	0.0054
Thailand	Baht	0.022585	0.029326	1.4242
UAE	Dirham	0.209699	0.272294	13.2240
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.298500	63.0617
Korea	Won	0.000826	0.001072	0.0521
China	Yuan**	0.099300	0.128941	6.2620
Argentina	Peso	0.248426	0.322581	15.6661
Brazil	Real	0.369805	0.480192	23.3205
Denmark	Kroner	0.134118	0.174152	8.4577
India	Rupee	0.017491	0.022712	1.1030
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.220317	0.286082	13.8936
Mexico	New Peso	0.070434	0.091458	4.4417
New Zealand	Dollar	0.523998	0.680411	33.0442
South Africa	Rand	0.107416	0.139480	6.7738
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.023379	0.030357	1.4743

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY Time—Feb. 6, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Feb. 6, 2007

Curb corruption, ADB urges gov't

By Michelle V. Remo

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK, ONE OF THE country's biggest sources of foreign financial assistance, has urged the government to curb corruption in public procurement, as this hampers fiscal development goals.

"The Philippines has not yet adopted a specific code of conduct for officials in public procurement that takes into consideration the particular corruption risks in this field," ADB said in a book entitled, "Curbing Corruption in Public Procurement in Asia and the Pacific."

The book that discusses various procurement issues in 25 countries was published recently by the ADB together with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

ADB suggested in the book that the Philippine government enact a law against corrupt procurement personnel.

Problems in public procurement noted

The foreign financial community has acknowledged the marked improvement in the Philippines' fiscal condition, but at the same time said that the next big hurdle was corruption.

The World Bank, another major lender to the Philippines, earlier said the government had to strengthen its anticorruption reforms to sustain its efforts to trim the budget deficit.

The Department of Budget and Management recently reported that it had required government agencies to adopt a uniform process of procuring supplies and services electronically.

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said improvements in the e-procurement process was a way to address inefficiencies in procurement.

But the ADB said there was a need for the Philippine government to further promote integrity among procurement personnel and safeguard itself from corruption.

The foreign lender said one way to do so was to encourage witnesses to go out in the open.

"The Philippines is invited to actively pursue the enactment of a whistle-blower protection system, which would facilitate the detection of corruption in public procurement," the ADB said.

"Addressing corruption in public procurement is an important component of any effective anti-corruption strategy," the ADB added.

The ADB noted that at this time, there was no law that requires public officials to report irregularities in procurement.

The foreign funding agency, however, has noted efforts of the government to develop a framework governing the procurement process.

Globe told to drop new text offer

By Riza T. Olchondra

THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS Commission has directed Globe Telecom Inc. to stop implementing its new "Unlimited Texting" offer and instead revert to its old "Unlimitxt" program.

NTC issued Globe a cease and desist order yesterday after the country's second largest mobile phone firm refused to roll back text promo rates to comply with its "Unlimitxt" program.

The NTC said that based on tests it ran Tuesday, Globe still carried the "Unlimited Texting" offer and did not restore the previous "Unlimitxt" service as ordered.

Last Feb. 1, Globe announced that the company's four-day "Unlimitxt" now costs P80, compared to the previous charge of P50 for five days under Unlimitxt.

The new promo also includes options for daytime unlimited texting, which stretches from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and costs P10, and nighttime unlimited texting which also costs P10 and covers 10 p.m. to 7:59 a.m. of the following day.

Also on Feb. 1, consumer group TXTPower filed a complaint saying that the new promo was a "veiled price hike."

In response, the NTC ordered Globe last Feb. 5 to restore its old buffet texting promotional prices pending a public hearing.

However, Globe said the following day that it would not suspend its latest unlimited text service due to "legal constraints."

The NTC en-banc has called for an initial hearing on Globe's text program tomorrow at 2 p.m.

TXTPower lauded the NTC's cease and desist order and urged consumers to join a nationwide boycott of the telco's services starting 12:01 a.m. today.

In a statement sent through e-mail, TXTPower asked subscribers "incensed by Globe's defiance" to stop or at least limit SMS and calls through the Globe network, postpone automatic and card reloads, postpone GCash transactions, postpone line applications, refrain from making icon or music downloads from Globe, and refrain from using Globe's GPRS and 3G services.

"Globe fully deserves to be boycotted because it is disrespecting consumers, the government, and the law," TXTPower spokesperson Anthony Ian Cruz said in a phone interview.

Globe spokesperson Jones Campos, meanwhile, said that Globe would answer all the allegations in a formal submission to be sent to the NTC today.

Terna SPA threatens to junk Transco bid

By Abigail L. Ho

TERNA SPA, THE ITALIAN PARTner of local firm Citadel Holdings Inc. in bidding for the 25-year National Transmission Corp. (Transco) concession, is likely to walk away from the deal if government decides to conduct another public bidding.

When the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. declared Monday's bidding for the Transco concession a failure, with the Citadel-Terna group as the lone bidder, Terna chief financial officer Fabio Todeschini said the company's first reaction was to just walk away.

"We still need to discuss that internally, but our first reaction was to walk away," he said in a briefing yesterday.

Citadel senior vice president Rogelio Singson said the consortium was still asking the government to junk the re-bidding option and instead just conduct negotiations with the Citadel-Terna group.

He said that although there were three groups pre-qualified to bid for the Transco concession, the Citadel-Terna consortium was the only one that actually submitted a final technical and financial bid before last Monday's noon deadline, proving how serious it was about operating, maintaining and expanding the nationwide transmission grid.

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Infocomm eyes venture in Singapore

By Daxim L. Lucas

LISTED INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY firm IPVG Corp. has entered into a deal that would allow it to buy shares in — or sell shares of one of its units to — a Singapore-based online gaming company.

The so-called "option to purchase" agreement signed with Infocomm Asia Holdings Pte. Ltd. (IAH) puts IPVG in a position to enhance its online gaming operations in the country. But it also opens the door for either firm to take an ownership position in the other.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange, IPVG said IAH will have a call option within 15 months from the execution of the agreement to purchase shares in its gaming subsidiary, IP E-Games.

On the other hand, IPVG including the original shareholders, "shall also have the option to purchase shares in IAH or a publicly listed firm owned and controlled by IAH."

IPVG is a listed company with three operating subsidiaries in information technology and telecommunications, online gaming and business process outsourcing (BPO).

Yesterday, the firm said its subsidiary IP E-Game Ventures Inc. (IP E-Games) has partnered with regional gaming firm IAH for online games.

Under the agreement, IP E-Games becomes the exclusive publisher and distributor of IAH titles, including the multi-awarded "Granado Espada" ("G.E"), a triple-AAA title developed by Hakkyu Kim, the recognized "father to Korean online games" and creator of Ragnarok.

The partnership takes both IP E-Games and IAH further into the rapidly growing Philippine market for Massively Multiplayer Online Game (MMOG) and Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPG).

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'New boss, new direction' boosts RCBC

SHAREHOLDERS OF RIZAL COMMERCial Banking Corp. (RCBC) are P12.8 billion richer, with the bank's stock price almost doubling in a span of only a month, latest data from the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE) reveal.

According to PSE data, RCBC's performance since early January 2007 has outstripped the local stock market index and other banking stocks—a behavior attributed by market watchers to the recent shakeup in the bank's top management.

In particular, stock market analysts believe that the bank's share price has benefited from the appointment of Lorenzo V. Tan as the bank's new chief executive.

"That can be part of the reason why the price per share is aggressively rising," UBS Securities research head Jody Santiago said. "Lorenzo Tan was instrumental in turning PNB (Philippine National Bank) around."

He added that sentiment toward the banking sector was also getting a boost from a favorable macroeconomic environment, which makes it easy for banks to raise fresh capital.

A weak capital base has long hounded RCBC, with its capital adequacy ratio—the proportion of equity to assets exposed to risk—being one of the lowest among big-league banks.

On the PSE, RCBC's stock price ended at P44 apiece yesterday, up P1 from the previous day's close of P43 with P18.5 million worth of shares changing hands.

However, since Jan. 5, 2007—the date when Tan's appointment was made public—its share price has risen by 83 percent.

The bank is relatively small compared to other listed financial heavyweights with a market capitalization of only P27.8 billion, but this may improve further as interest in the issue picks up.

Daxim L. Lucas

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ANTONIO A. CHUA, SR., CPA

Former Provincial Treasurer of Isabela

now peacefully rests in the Grace and Goodness of our Lord on the 6th day of February, 2007 at the age of 68.

His bereaved wife **Charing**; children **Ann & Ed, Maricel & Chemari, Tonypet & Marissa, Vivo & Coke, Jojo & Carla**; sisters & brother **Emy & Geny, Ario & Carding, Desh & Ato, Paul & Josie, Mila & Caloy**; grandchildren **Pons, Gelo, Marge, Tricia, Steph, Edrianne, Jacob, Patrick, Joshua, Kaithlyn, Jilli, Renjay, Janna, L, Lia, Kyla, Chloe** and all relatives and friends request the readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Chapel A, La Funeraria Paz, Inc., Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment is on February 11, 2007, Sunday at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

JACINTO "PACHING" DE LOS REYES SR.

of CUYO, PALAWAN

Peacefully joined his Creator after receiving the last sacraments on February 6, 2007 at the age of 91.

His loving wife **Feling**; children **Joseling & Mila, Fr. Jess, Junnie & Cheding, Titing & Luding, Fr. Joel, Jimmy & Neneng, Vieve & Winston**, grandchildren and great-grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His body lies in state at the Premier Chapel of the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapels, Sucat Road, Parañaque City.

Interment will be on Sunday, February 11, 2007 at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque City after the 1:00 p.m. Mass.

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord."
— 2 Corinthians 5:8

Juanito Manguerra Ongsansoy

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of our father and friend, Juanito, who passed away in his sleep at home in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada on Feb. 1, 2007, at the too-young age of 67.

Juanito is survived by his sons, Hans Jeffrey, of Vancouver, and Ian Nigel, of Winnipeg, and moves on to a better place having accomplished much while touching the hearts and minds of many.

Born Oct. 14, 1939, in Binan, Laguna, the Philippines, Juanito moved to Canada in 1975.

Juanito is also survived by ex-wife Emma, sister Adoring, brothers Rot and Rey, half-siblings Roderick, Rachel and Bo, and numerous nieces, nephews, relatives, godchildren and friends.

He was predeceased by his first wife Fe, parents Juan and Loreto, sisters Evelyn, Edna and Dely, brother Domingo, and half-sister Elaine.

The family will be having a simple funeral service preceded by viewing at Wojcik's Funeral Chapel and Crematorium before interment at Glen Eden Memorial Gardens.

For details, please call 204-694-5470 or 204-694-4160.

The family requests that you save a special place in your thoughts and prayers for our beloved Juanito.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Our Dearly Beloved

Dra. Ruth Perez Viñas

(of Tugatog, Malabon and Hillsborough Alabang)

*Peacefully joined the Lord and her husband **Ponching** on February 6, 2007 at the age of 77.*

Her children **Joey & Mari-vikk, Chito & Mids, Clem, Noli & Ida, Bobby & Arlene** and **Rose May & Rey**; grandchildren **Marc, Michael, Angelica, Derick, Regine, Paolo, Jomari, Julia, Ernest, Jovie, Arvie & Katsy**; her sisters, brothers, in-laws and other relatives and friends request your prayers for the repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati.

CLASSIFIEDS

AyalaLand

INVITATION TO BID
ALI Bid Sale No. 01-2007

Ayala Land, Inc. is inviting offers to purchase by way of sealed bids the following items:

LOT NO.	DESCRIPTION	LOCATION OF ITEMS	MINIMUM BID
Lot 1	Assorted Office Equipment / Furniture	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P30,920.00
Lot 2	Assorted Electrical Items	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P22,093.00
Lot 3	Assorted Light Equipment and Tools	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P54,830.00
Lot 4	Assorted Heavy Equipment	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P99,000.00
Lot 5	Scaffoldings / Cross Braces / GI Pipes / Steel Bars	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P677,190.00
Lot 6	Assorted Common Hardwares	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P71,790.00
Lot 7	Curtain and Hanger Rods / Ceiling and Wall / Doors and Jambs / Survey Equipment	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P29,760.00
Lot 8	Assorted Ceramic Tiles	Montgomery Place, 222 E. Rodriguez Ave., Quezon City	P80,290.00

Details of the items as well as the bid documents (Bid Forms, Bidders Tender and Invitation to Bid) may be obtained at Ayala Land, Inc – Strategic Procurement Division (ALI-SPD), Bldg. 6, EDSA corner McKinley Road, Makati City. Contact person: Engr. Rey Lavapiez, Telephone No. 818-7471 (loc. 109).

Ocular inspection is scheduled on February 10, 2007 at 10:00 a.m. Inquiries regarding the viewing of items may be directed to Rider Hunt Llacor, Inc. (RHLI) at Tel. No. 448-7001 c/o Engr. Caloy Dieta.

Sealed bids should be dropped at the Bid Box located at ALI-SPD on or before February 12, 2007 at exactly 2:00 p.m. The bids shall be labeled ALI-BID SALE No. 01-2007.

Bidder's deposit equivalent to ten (10) percent of the bid price in Cash (Philippine Currency) or in Certified Manager's Check in favor of Ayala Land, Inc. shall be enclosed with the sealed bid. Any other form or draft purportedly as manner of payment is not acceptable. A bid without the required bidder's bond shall be declared disqualified.

The bidder must sign the bid form, bidders tender and the sealed envelop across its flap. Unsigned documents shall be a ground for the disqualification of the bid offer. Any erasure, correction, and/or addition must be initialed by the bidder.

The sealed bids will be opened in the presence of the representatives from ALI-SPD, ALI-Audit and Systems, all participating bidders or their representatives and other interested parties.

The sale of the items shall be on an "As is, Where is" basis. The winning bidder shall undertake the full responsibility to acquire the necessary permits in order to have peaceful possession of the items included in the sale.

Upon evaluation and determination of the result of the bidding, a Notice of Award will be issued to the winning bidder. In the event that the winning bidder failed to abide by the conditions of the bid including payment of the bid price, the bid deposit will be forfeited in favor of ALI. The award shall then be given to the next qualified highest bidder.

Upon the winning bidder's acceptance of the Notice of Award, full payment must be made within three (3) working days at ALI-Treasury, 30/F Tower One, Ayala Triangle, Makati City. This will be in the form of cash or manager's check in favor of Ayala Land, Inc. A penalty of ten (10) percent of the bid price plus an additional interest based on the prevailing market rate shall be imposed if the winning bidder fails to withdraw the merchandise from the designated storage area after seven (7) calendar days from the date of receipt of the Notice of Award.

The award shall be made to the bidder who made the most advantageous offer to Ayala Land, Inc. ALI reserves the right to reject any or all bids, or to waive any defect found therein.

All awards shall be subject to the approval of the head of ALI's Strategic Procurement Division and the ALI Comptroller whose decision shall be binding on all concerned.

(Signed)
JUANITO P. ROSALES
Vice President
Strategic Procurement Division

(PDI--Feb. 8, 2007)

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF BUKIDNON
Provincial Capitol 8700

OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNOR

AN OPEN INVITATION TO ALL SUPPLIERS OF MEDICINES

The Provincial Government of Bukidnon (PGB), through the Bids and Awards Committee, is inviting all suppliers of medicines to participate in its procurement needs of medicines for its seven (7) Provincial Hospitals and Twenty-two (22) Provincial Health Stations. The PGB has allotted an annual budget (CY 2007) of One Hundred Million (P100,000,000) Pesos for this purpose. We assure all those concerned that we, in the province of Bukidnon, fully and strictly adhere to the basic policy of transparency in accordance with the tenets of R.A. 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act. We also assure everyone that our budget allocation for our medicine requirements is very competitive because our procurement process is "commission-free". We repeat, and we would like to stress that we do not allow, much less, accept "commission" or "bribe money" from any supplier or contractor, hence, there is no reason for all of you to jack up your prices as part of your add-on costs.

We prefer BFAD-approved generic Drugs and medicines, and we encourage manufacturers, importers and sole distributors who can offer the most advantageous prices to the PGB to participate in our bulk procurement scheme.

So for those interested to join in our procurement needs for medicines kindly get in touch with our BAC Secretariat c/o Joan Bayona at 088-211-2537, 088-221-4820; 09173491624.

(Sgd.) **Jose Ma. R. Zubiri, Jr.**
Provincial Governor

(PDI--Feb. 1 & 8, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National	Position
ONE ZONE ASIA PHILIPPINES, INC. 24/F, Antel Global Bldg., J. Vargas Ave., Ortigas Ctr., Pasig City	Garry Scott Wilkie	Structural Engineering Manager
SINGAPORE TELECOM INTERNATIONAL PTE. LTD. 5/F, Globe Telecom Plaza I, Pioneer cor. Madison Sts., Mandaluyong City	Se-Hsleng Eng	Consultant
ME NIHONGO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE EXCHANGE, INC. 3/F, E397 A&M Bldg., Binakod St., J.P. Rizal Ave., Olympia, Makati City	Hiromune Eikawa	Teacher
E-WORLD TRAVEL & TOURS PHIL. CORP. Unit 1005, 10/F Pearl of the Orient Tower, 1240 Roxas Blvd., Ermita, Manila	Janghyeok Seo	Sales Manager
PHILIPPINE BILLION STRONG MINERAL CORP. No. 50 Lapu Lapu St., Magallanes Village, Makati City	Guosheng Sun	Chairman
ASIAN TERMINALS, INC. ATI Head Office, A. Bonifacio Drive, Port Area, Manila	Suhail Aqil Mohd Albanna	Director and Executive Vice President-Technical
PHILIPPINE BILLION STRONG MINERAL CORP. No. 50 Lapu Lapu St., Magallanes Village, Makati City	Peisheng Gao	Director
ACCENTURE, INC. MSE Bldg., Ayala Ave., Makati City	Toh Choon Ping Serene	Consultant
GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES (SPV-AMC) INC. Unit 2703, 27/F 88 Corporate Center, 141 Sedeno cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Sureshchandra Parmeshwar Soni	Manager-Systems Engineering
ALPS BRAKE CORP. 1003 Armstrong St., Moonwalk Village, Multinational, Parañaque City	Seung Chul Lee	President
GLOBAL STEEL PHILIPPINES (SPV-AMC) INC. Unit 2703, 27/F 88 Corporate Center, 141 Sedeno cor. Valero Sts., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Kishan Pal	Assistant General Manager-Mechanical Maintenance
YBM PNT INC. 28/F IBM Plaza City Cyberpark, E. Rodriguez Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City	Chang Su Kim	President
SGC COMPLETE GENERAL MERCHANDISE TRADING CO. LTD. 329 Libertad St., Pasay City	Po-Yen Chen	Consultant
EZENGLISH CORP. 1216 3/F Acacia Ave., MBP, Ayala Alabang, Muntinlupa City	Kyung Sun Park	President
NEW JENHO PLASTIC INDUSTRIES 8 Malakas St., Dalandanan, Valenzuela City	Te-Ho Chen	Consultant
UNISEA PHILIPPINES INC. 3/F, Philcox Bldg., 172 Salcedo St., Legaspi Village, Makati City	Michael Broomhall Shuker	Consultant
FIL. KOR GOLF & BEACH CLUB CORP. U-308, 8459 Kalayaan Ave. cor. Don Pedro St., Poblacion, Makati City	Miok Oh (w/o Hwang)	General Manager
FIL. KOR GOLF & BEACH CLUB CORP. U-308, 8459 Kalayaan Ave. cor. Don Pedro St., Poblacion, Makati City	Sanghun Lee	Operation Manager
WANG CHOI FOOD INT'L. CORPORATION U-419 Celery Road, FTI Complex, Taguig City	Seung Wook Baek	General Manager
AZTERISK CONSULTANTS INC. #19 A Gumamela St., Clinicville, BF Homes, Parañaque City	Ho Rim Song	Accounts Manager
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F, Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Pradip Devidas Dhande	Functional Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F, Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Ananth Raghavan	Functional Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F, Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Suddha Satwa Laik	Functional Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F, Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Srikanta Mishra	Functional Analyst
LARSEN & TOUBRO INFOTECH LIMITED 4/F, Valero Tower, 122 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Anoop Puthuparambath Shankaran	Functional Analyst
KEPCO ILIJAN CORPORATION 18/F, Citibank Tower, 8741 Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati City	Kang Won Lee	President and CEO
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Michael Mervyn Seepersaud	Customer Support Staff
DE CASTRO & KANG MANAGEMENT & CONSULTANCY, INC. 2/F T-Tower Bldg., 5040 P. Burgos St., Poblacion, Makati City	Hyoung Woo Kim	Korean Language Interpreter 2
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	David Leon Lowes	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Eli Lapid	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Gerwyn Earle Melvin Smith	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Izhar Biran	Customer Support Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 14/F Yuchengco Tower, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Chatrishe Amaya Baptiste	Payment Processing Staff
PARAGON INTERNATIONAL CUSTOMER CARE LIMITED 27/F Yuchengco Tower I, RCBC Plaza, 6819 Ayala Ave., Makati City	Gregory O.J.H. Fermont	Customer Support Staff

If you have any information/objection to the abovementioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

LOURDES M. TRASMONTE
Regional Director

(PDI–Feb. 8, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Local Civil Registry Office
Don Carlos, Bukidnon
-o0o-

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section of R.A. Act No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that **LEVI HIDALGO PADILLA** has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from **LAURENCE LEVI** to **LEVI** in the birth certificate of **LAURENCE LEVI HIDALGO PADILLA** who was born on **September 11, 1949** at **Burgos St., Isabela, Negros Occidental** and whose parents are **Andres M. Padilla** and **Haydee B. Hidalgo**.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his/her written opposition with this Office not later than **February 23, 2007**.

(Sgd.) **MELISA R. CAVALIDA**
Municipal Civil Registrar

(PDI - Feb. 1 & 8, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
MANILA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY
MIAA Administration Building, MIA Road, Pasay City, Metro Manila

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING/CONSULTATION

The Manila International Airport Authority will conduct a public hearing/consultation on March 2, 2007 at 2:00 PM regarding proposed adjustment of rental of its land and buildings located within the Airport Complex, as follows:

LOCATION/CATEGORY	PROPOSED RATE PER MONTH
I. General Aviation Area	
A. Land	
A.1 Developed	P 96.00/sq.m.
B.2 Undeveloped	72.00/sq.m
B. Hangar	
B.1 Office	190.00 sq.m.
B.2 Hanger Proper	154.00 sq.m.
II. Other Areas	
A. Land located along Ninoy Aquino Ave., MIA Road, Domestic Road, Andrews Ave., Aurora Blvd., SLEX and the vicinity of Terminal Bldgs.	
A.1 Developed	132.00/sq.m.
A.2 Undeveloped	108.00/sq.m.

LOCATION/CATEGORY	PROPOSED RATE PER MONTH
B. Land located on Areas not specified above	
B.1 Developed	P 119.00/sq.m.
B.2 Undeveloped	86.00/sq.m.
C Building	
C.1 Steel/Concrete	313.00/sq.m.
C.2 Wooden/Light Materials	107.00/sq.m.
D International Cargo Terminal	
D.1 Ground Floor – Airlines	300.00/sq.m.
– Commercial	400.00/sq.m.
– Storage/	150.00/sq.m.
Warehouse	
D.2 Mezzanine – Airlines	
– Commercial	

The public hearing/consultation will be held at the Boardroom, 4/F, MIAA Administration, MIA Road, Pasay City.

The Authority invites the public to attend and participate in the public hearing/consultation.

For particulars, please inquire at the Business Development & Concessions Management Department at Tel. Nos. 832-2912, 877-1109 locs. 3071, 3709 & 3545.

(Sgd.) **ALFONSO G. CUSI**

(PDI – February 8 & 15, 2007)

Philippine Economic Zone Authority
PEZA
Bataan Economic Zone, Mariveles, Bataan
Telephone (6347) 935-4004; 561-2451 Fax (6347) 935-6046

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1. The PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY – BATAAN ECONOMIC ZONE (PEZA-BEZ), through its Corporate Budget for the CY 2007 intends to apply the sum of **(1) Php 5,511,138.65 and (2) Php 4,006,729.10** being the **Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)** to payments under the contract for the **(1) BEZ Grounds and Facilities Maintenance and (2) Operations and Maintenance of BEZ Waterworks and Sewerage Collection System for the Bataan Economic Zone** located at BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at Bid opening.
2. The PEZA-BEZ now invites sealed Bids from Eligible Bidders for the above mentioned contracts as described below:

   Brief Description: Supply of Labor, Equipment and Supervision

   1. BEZ Grounds and Facilities Maintenance

No. of Personnel/Workers	Contract Duration	Delivery Period
Thirty Eight (38)	One (1) calendar year	within 15 calendar days after Notice to Proceed

   2. Operation and Maintenance of BEZ Waterworks & Sewerage Collection System

No. of Personnel/Workers	Contract Duration	Delivery Period
Twenty Five (25)	One (1) calendar year	within 15 calendar days after Notice to Proceed

   The description of an eligible bidder is contained in Section II of the Bidding Documents, **INSTRUCTION TO BIDDERS (ITB).**
3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass-fail" criteria as specified in the Implementing Rules and Regulations Part A (IRR-A) of Republic Act 9184 (R.A. 9184) otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform ACT," and is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stocks belonging to citizens of the Philippines, or to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights of privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to Republic Act 5183 (R.A. 5183) and subject to Commonwealth Act 138 (C.A. 138). Only Bids from Bidders who pass the eligibility check will be opened. The process for the eligibility check is described in Section II of the Bidding Documents, ITB. The bidder with the Lowest Calculated Bid (LCB) shall advance to the post-qualification stage in order to finally determine responsiveness of the bid to technical and financial requirements of the project. The contract shall then be awarded to the Lowest Calculated and Responsive Bidder (LCRB) who was determined as such during the post-qualification procedure.
4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from PEZA-BEZ and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Mondays to Fridays.
5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from 13 to 19 February 2007, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from the address below upon submission of a **Letter of Intent (LOI)** and a certified copy of their **G-EPS Registration Certificate and e-FPS enrollment** and upon payment of a non-refundable fee in the amount of One Thousand Pesos only (Php 1,000.00). The method of payment will be on a **cash basis** only. The Bidding Documents shall be received personally by the prospective Bidder or his authorized representative.
6. The PEZA-BEZ will hold a Pre-Bid Conference open to all interested parties on February 26, 2007, 2:00 p.m. at the Audio-Visual Room, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan.
7. Bids and eligibility requirements must be delivered to the address below on or **before 1:30 P.M.** of **12 March 2007**. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security in the form of cash, certified check, cashier's check, manager's check, bank draft or irrevocable Letter of Credit in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 55,111.38 (2) Php 40,067.29, Bank Guarantee in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 82,667.07, (2) Php 60,100.93; or in the form of Surety Bond in the amount of not less than: (1) Php 137,778.46 (2) Php 100,168.22.
8. Bid opening shall be on **12 March 2007 at 2:00 P.M.** at the Audio-Visual Room, 2nd Floor, BEZ Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidder's representatives who choose to attend.
9. In case any of the above dates is declared a special non-working holiday, it will automatically be reset on the next working day.
10. The PEZA-BEZ reserves the right to accept or reject any Bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Philippine Economic Zone Authority-BEZ
Bids and Awards Committee Secretariat
EMD Office, Ground Floor, BEZ
Administration Building, BEZ, Mariveles, Bataan
Tel. No. (047) 934-4008 / Fax No. (047) 935-6046
E-mail: bez_bac1@yahoo.com
Website: www.peza.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **DIONISIO T. SAMEN**
BEZ-BAC Chairman

Noted:
(Sgd.) **DANTE M. QUINDOZA**
Zone Administrator

(PDI – February 8 & 15, 2007)

Standard Form Number: SF-GOOD-05
Revised on: July 26, 2004

Republic of the Philippines
PROVINCE OF LA UNION
City of San Fernando

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION**, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder contract:

NAME OF CONTRACT	LOCATION	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (P)	CONTRACT DURATION
7 units SERVICE VEHICLE 1.0 DELUXE WITH BUILT IN AIRCON **Specifications:** **Engine Type:** F10A, 4 cycle, water cooled OHC, 4 cylinders, 970cc piston displacement, 44HP/5300rpm **Transmission: 5 speed manual transmission** **Chassis:** Rack & pinion steering, front disc and rear drum brakes, Mcpherson strut, coil spring front suspension, rigid axle, leaf spring rear suspension Capacity: Tires: 175R13, wheels: 4.5 x 13" steel Fuel tanks, 36 liters Other features: AUV Passenger body, sliding glass windows, collapsible seat assembly, dome lights, with complete tools and duplicate key With: Floormats and regular tint **2 Units GLS DIESEL M/T 4x4 (2007 MODEL) TRITON** **Specifications:** **Engine type:** 2.5L direct injection diesel, 4 in line DOHC, 16V turbocharged and intercooled (4D56) Fuel system, common rail direct injection **Transmission: 5 speed manual easy select 4WD** **Suspension:** Front-independent double wishbone with coil spring and stabilizer (rear) rear rigid axle, elliptic leaf spring with telescopic shock absorbers Brakes-front 16" ventilated disc, rear 11.6" leading and trailing drums Steering-gear type rack and pinion, power steering 4 spoke leather-wrapped with tilt adjustment steering wheel Audio-single in dash tuner/CD/MP3/ipo-usb ready 6 speaker stereo Safety: ABS w/ EBD, dual SRS airbags, seatbelts, child protection lock, tire pressure monitoring system, side impact beams, MMAS keyless entry with alarm Interior-4WD indicator, automatic climate control air conditioner, multi-information display monitor, high contrast instrument meter cluster, chrome inner door handle and silver painted side window control panel, rear seat center folding armset with cup holders, floor console with lid, cup holder and accessory socket, high grade sports type fabric seats. Exterior chrome inset radiator grill, painted side protector moulding, chrome plated exterior door handles side and rear vent power windows front & rear mudguard, chrome plated power door mirrors, newly designed back step bumper, cargo bedliner Tires and wheels 245/70R16 16" x 7" JJ	Provincial Government of La Union, City of San Fernando, La Union	For use in the Provincial Government of La Union	P3,395,000.00	120 days

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	*Schedule*
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	February 16, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	February 21, 2007, 9:00 A.M. PHO Conference Room, Capitol Bldg., SFC
3. Opening of Bids	February 28, 2007, 9:00 A.M. PHO Conference Room, Capitol Bldg., SFC
4. Bid Evaluation	March 1, 2007
5. Post-Qualification	March 2, 2007
6. Notice of Award	March 2, 2007

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of: for **SERVICE VEHICLE 1.0 DELUXE W/ BUILT IN AIRCON =P 3,000.00** and **GLS DIESEL M/T 4 X 4 (2007 MODEL) TRITON = P3,000.00 to the Office of the Provincial Treasurer's Cashier.**

The **PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF LA UNION** assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) **DR. GEOFFREY S. TILAN**
BAC Chairman

(PDI – February 8, 2007)

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LB (Land Bank) Realty Development Corporation

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

All contractors, registered and/or classified by the **Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB)** for Buildings and Industrial Plan and preferably with experience in the construction of bank building or projects of identical scope of works and technology, are invited to apply for pre-qualification and to submit their bids for the **renovation/construction** of the following **LBP BRANCH OFFICES:**

Branch Office	Location	Category
LBP Dagupan Branch	Dagupan City	Medium
LBP Roxas Branch	Roxas, Isabela	Small

Pre-qualification requirements may be obtained from the Purchasing Unit of the **Land Bank Realty Development Corporation at 30th Flr., LBP Plaza, 1598 M.H. del Pilar corner J. Quintos Sts., Malate, Manila.** LBRDC reserves the right to change the cost estimates, the date of issuance of bid documents, pre-bid conference, submission of bids and date of bidding. Due notice of changes shall however be communicated by **LBRDC** to invited bidders.

LBRDC likewise reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defect or formality, assumes no obligation whatsoever to compensate or indemnify the bidders for any expense or loss that they may incur in the preparation of their bid and to accept the bid most advantageous to the company.

For further details, please call **Allan G. Redondo/ Aries L. Mendoza at 405-7169/405-7402/405-7135.**

(Sgd.) **CHAIRMAN**
Committee on Bids and Awards

(PDI–Feb. 8, 2007)

BUSINESS

For the funds of it

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

IT LOOKS LIKE THE WORKING Cabinet of this cute administration will have no desertion, after all, to Gloriaetta's handpicked senatorial slate.

Maybe that information is relevant to big business. Or maybe not!

I only know that the *taipans*, for instance, are eagerly anticipating how much in campaign funds they will be badgered for.

Not just for the funds of it, however. Business does try to keep tab of movements in key Cabinet positions.

For when department heads leave their posts to run for the Senate, the harsher effect on business is lack of consistency.

You never know if the replacement secretary has ringworm for brains.

***

ACCORDING TO a tactician in one of the Palace's numerous political cliques, Environment Secretary Angelo Reyes may still drop his bid for the Senate. Among the Cabinet members (with portfolio, of course, and not the hangers-on in the Palace), Reyes was voted in business as most likely to make a go at politics.

The ex-AFP chief swallowed his military-machismo pride when he paid homage to the man who made him AFP chief, but whom he also deserted. That was none other than the under-house-arrest man named Band ... Wrist Band.

Reyes' body language must have already warned the *taipans* to be prepared to donate to his senatorial campaign.

Wait! According to my source, Reyes is not running because the huge cost of the campaign terrifies him.

One estimate puts the senatorial campaign budget at P150 million—easily. Well, nowadays, the candidate must also spend on media advertising, particularly on TV.

And do you know how much TV ads cost? Let's just say that the estimates scared the living daylights out of a soldier.

***

ONCE ALSO believed to be a "senator-wannabe" was Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, who is a former congressman himself. Not anymore, though!

A few months ago, the BIR held a series of open-to-the-public-with-free-food seminars called "Tax Enhancement Vehicle for Economic Stability."

Now, look at the first letters of those words. What do they spell? Right, Teves!

BIR regional offices have done the "Teves" in Clark, Las Piñas, Pasig and Quezon City. The bills for the seminar expenses of course went to the BIR regional offices.

Department of Finance people swear they had nothing to do with the seminars. They actually traced the bright idea to a political handler, a certain Roy Sangil, who was said to be an Ayala Alabang neighbor of Teves the secretary, not the seminar.

But the Teves series stopped, out of the blue, leaving doubt as to Teves' plan to run for the Senate.

Maybe he, as DOF chief, just wants to run the BIR directly himself.

***

OF COURSE Secretary (for whatever) Michael Defensor is running. The ever talkative Palace boy said so himself.

His departure from the Cabinet may have little—if any—effect on government policy, particularly that on business.

The guy never really showed any mettle as a line executive when he handled the housing program and headed the DENR. He was just good in winning elections. Attaboy!

***

HERE ARE some facts that, I'm afraid, will make you throw up, or throw anything you are holding at the first government official that you see.

Anyway, for electricity generated by coal, this cute administration charges tax equivalent to only about 10 centavos per kwh (kilowatthour).

Now this country imports a lot of coal, mostly on "commission basis" for our officials, if you know what I mean.

Moreover, coal burning is highly polluting.

It is estimated that the world's coal plants account for more than 25 percent of the world's carbon emission. You know—the main culprit behind global warming!

On the other hand, natural gas offers us the cleanest way to generate electricity. We also have lots of it here in the country. Yet, our government charges so-called royalties on natural gas, in effect adding to the cost of electricity, equivalent to roughly P1.79 per kwh.

Look at that: 10 centavos for polluting coal, 179 centavos for environment-friendly gas.

What explains it? Well, maybe as a people, we are just suicidal.

***

THE PR of Napocor wrote us in reaction to our piece on the Napocor bond flotation. (*Breaktime Jan. 11*)

The PR said that the flotation, having been oversubscribed, showed public confidence in Napocor. And how dare I, in effect, write against it!

Now, this is the company that just buried us taxpayers in P200 billion of its debts, which it passed on to the national government because it could not possibly pay for them anymore, as it has been bleeding worse than a haemophiliac for the longest time.

And its PR thought that the public thinks highly of it?

Boy, did he miss the point: This Napocor should be winding down because the Epira requires it to, and yet it still keeps borrowing a lot of money, and for what?

Not for investment, nope, because Napocor cannot put up any new power plant. This is against the law. Napocor fared in the business so badly, the legislature decided to ban it from the same business.

What's the bond flotation for? Well, for more debt payments! And, according to the PR, that is great news for us?

DBP earmarks ₱2B for lending to microentrepreneurs in regions

The target beneficiaries are those in country's poorest municipalities

By Doris C. Dumlao

STATE-OWNED DEVELOPMENT BANK OF the Philippines has set aside P2 billion for lending to microentrepreneurs in the country's poorest municipalities in partnership with microfinance institutions (MFIs).

"We will be targeting municipalities where less than 20 percent of poor families are served with microfinance," DBP president and CEO Reynaldo David said in a statement.

David said the P2 billion earmarked by the bank was meant to help existing microentrepreneurs expand their operations and create 30,000 new jobs.

Microfinance is the provision of small, collateral-free loans to the poor to help them start and grow their own businesses.

David said the bank would work closely with MFIs to increase lending to the poorest municipalities in 288 towns in 31 priority provinces with the lowest saturation rates in terms of loan access.

He said DBP would also build up the number of MFI partners for different microfinancing products such as enterprise development, housing/home improvement, PV Solar Home lighting and agriculture.

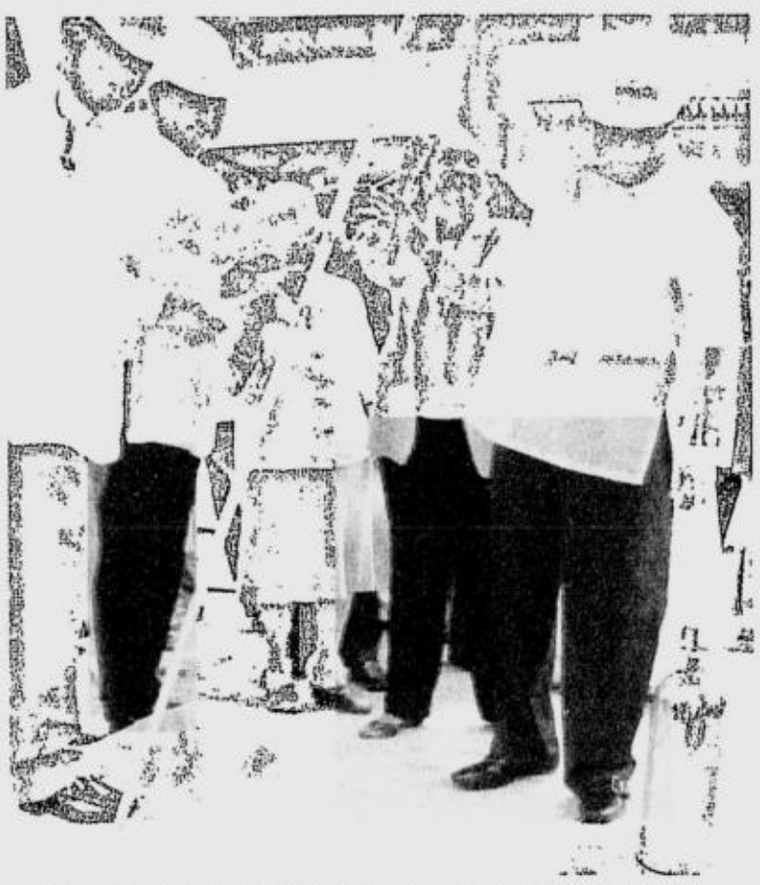
DBP is planning to establish partnerships for this microfinance development program in the 47 unserved areas to determine appropriate interventions for sustainable microfinancing operations.

Also, the bank, in cooperation with the Department of Agriculture and Asian non-government organizations, is finalizing a strategy on making microfinancing work in the agriculture sector.

"This will initially focus on a particular area or commodity anchored in the context of the Agricultural & Farm Modernization Act and Philippine Agriculture (PA 2020)," David said.

He added the bank would implement an advocacy program to shift the micro-entrepreneurs' primary economic activity from *sari-sari* store/trading to value-added economic activities that would create jobs.

Based on Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas data, there are now nearly 220 rural and thrift banks with microfinancing operations that reach more than 630,000 microentrepreneurs with an oustanding portfolio of P3.8 billion.



MAKATI MEDICAL Center chair Manny Pangilinan (right) leads hospital board members, officers and guests at the groundbreaking rites for MMC's new wing, a part of a P1.6-billion expansion program. The 12-level wing will house new facilities, including a heart station, breast cancer center, endoscopy and dialysis centers.

Gov't to seek ODAs for railway plan in Mindanao

By Riza T. Olchondra

OVERSEAS DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA) may be tapped to fund the $540-million Mindanao Railway System, a project that is seen to boost trade, transport and communication in the region, an official of the Department of Transportation and Communication (DOTC) said.

Transportation Undersecretary for Railway Guiling Mamondiong said Saudi Arabia, South Korea, and China had expressed interest in the Mindanao rail project.

"But if private companies would like to undertake the project, they are most welcome to submit proposals," he said.

He said the feasibility study for the project would be submitted to the National Economic Development Authority within this month.

According to Neda's online project monitoring site, the Mindanao Railway System traverses Cagayan de Oro-Iligan Corridor, covering key industrial zones Phividec Industrial Estate, Metro Iligan Regional Agri-Industrial Center, Alwana Business Park, Ayala Light Industrial Park and FCDO Business Park.

"Although it (Mindanao rail program) is not a medium-term project, the government wants to at least start important works as early as possible, even if project completion would be beyond 2010," Mamondiong said.

He added that the Cagayan de Oro-Iligan Corridor was the only industrial corridor in Mindanao and the rail program would address calls from investors to improve the Mindanao transportation facilities, thus boosting investment in this area.

Gardenia building ₱300-M facility

By Ronnel W. Domingo

GARDENIA BAKERIES (PHILIPPINES) INC. yesterday announced it was building a P300-million facility for making *pandesal* in line with its efforts to corner a greater slice of the market valued at about P3 billion a year.

Simplicio P. Umali Jr., president and general manager of the Singaporean-owned firm, said the new plant was expected to be operational late next year or early 2009.

"It would be located in the remaining 1,000-square-meter lot on Gardenia's 2.2-hectare-bread-making facility at the Laguna International Industrial Park," Umali said.

He added that the plant would be "versatile" and would be able to make the buns as well as Gardenia's product line of snacks.

"Once the new plant is in place, we expect Gardenia's share of the *pandesal* market would grow to a fifth of its overall business or five times the current 4 percent," Umali said.

The official cited available estimates placing sales in 2003 at 200 million packs of 10 pieces each, with the bulk of turnover observed in small neighborhood bakeries.

He said that in the same year, Gardenia's *pandesal* cornered a 35-percent share of total domestic sales in supermarkets, groceries and convenience stores. This went up to 44 percent in 2005 and to 50 percent in 2006.

Gardenia is selling two kinds of *pandesal*—the premium variant at 35 grams apiece at P2.75 each and the lighter variant at 25 grams for P2 apiece.

Recently, Gardenia has also introduced a third variant which is the whole wheat *pandesal*.

He said a study conducted by the company earlier found that Filipinos buy *pandesal* from neighborhood bakeries six days a week mostly for breakfast and a few for *baon* (snack packs). It also showed that Filipinos buy loaf bread at the supermarket or groceries twice a week, of which 77 percent is for snacks at home while 31 percent is for *baon* (snack packs).

Following the conclusion of the study, Umali said Gardenia had developed a technology that could produce *pandesal* that would last up to a week and still remain fresh and tasty.

He said the product could last up to four weeks in the refrigerator and even "for months" if frozen.

Philex exports ₱819M worth of gold, silver

By Daxim L. Lucas

PUBLICLY LISTED PHILEX MINing Corp. exported P819 million worth of precious metals—gold, silver and copper—last month, a company disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange showed.

"In January, 781,865 DMT (dry metric tons) of disseminated gold and copper ore were delivered by the mine and treated at the Banget flotation facilities," Philex chairman and CEO Walter W. Brown said in his letter to the exchange.

The process yielded 6,357 dry metric tons of copper concentrates averaging 26.36 percent copper; 56.78 grams per dry metric ton of gold, and 54.13 grams per dry metric ton of silver.

The total yield reached 1,675,903 kilograms of copper, 361,225 grams of gold and 334,129 grams of silver.

Earlier, Philex announced it had begun the "pre-feasibility stage" for its mining project in Northeastern Mindanao, which might contain significant deposits of gold and copper.

Philex Mining said Philex Gold Inc. was preparing the final report on the pre-feasibility study which would be completed by the third quarter of 2007.

It said that based on a report from Anglo American Plc. initial activities had already been done or were underway.

Ilocos 'chichacorn' makes it to Cyprus, Australia and Saudi

SMALL-SCALE ENTERPRISES IN Ilocos Norte have made inroads to markets abroad with their *cornik* or *chichacorn* through the One Town One Product program, according to Trade Undersecretary Carissa C. Evangelista.

Evangelista, who heads the Department of Trade and Industry's regional operations group, said eight entrepreneurs who belong to the Paoay Chichacorn Producers Association were able to tap markets in Cyprus, Australia and Saudi Arabia.

"This is just the start and the export volume is modest but opportunities abound as the product has broken ground in a very competitive international market," she said.

"Cornik is a popular food snack among Filipinos and we aim to market it in foreign countries where there are large Filipino communities," she added.

Evangelista said the DTI was aiming at developing more food products for exportation to countries hosting big Filipino communities.

DTI data show that in 2006, *cornik* or *chichacorn*—Paoay's Otop—posted $14,500 in export sales and P14 million in domestic sales.

"The *cornik* industry is a thriving industry in Ilocos Norte and with Otop, we expect the industry to expand further through product development, packaging assistance, and market exposure in local and international trade fairs," Evangelista said.

Helping the Otop program in Ilocos Norte are other government agencies like Department of Science and Technology, Department of Labor and Employment, Technical Education & Skills Development Authority and Mariano Marcos State University.

The eight enterprises have an average capitalization of P1.5 million each. They were able to create 482 jobs for locals. They include Aling Presing's Chichacorn and Food Products, Fingerbits Chichacorn, Lutong Ilocos Food Products, Lutong Paoay Chichacorn and Food Products, Namnama's Cornik and Food Products, Nana Rosa's Cornik, V.E.A. Food Products and Victor Angel's Cornik and Food Products.

The Otop in Paoay has spurred regular participation in the yearly National Trade Fair, particularly of Lutong Ilocos Food Products and Namnama's Cornick & Food Products.

The association's successful participation in the 1st Otop Luzon Trade Fair has earned members a total of at least P600,000 and enabled them to maintain 65 market outlets spread Metro Manila, Baguio, Bulacan, Tagaytay, Laguna, Bataan, Lucena, Cebu, Cotabato, Pangasinan, Ilocos Sur and Norte. *Ronnel W. Domingo*

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

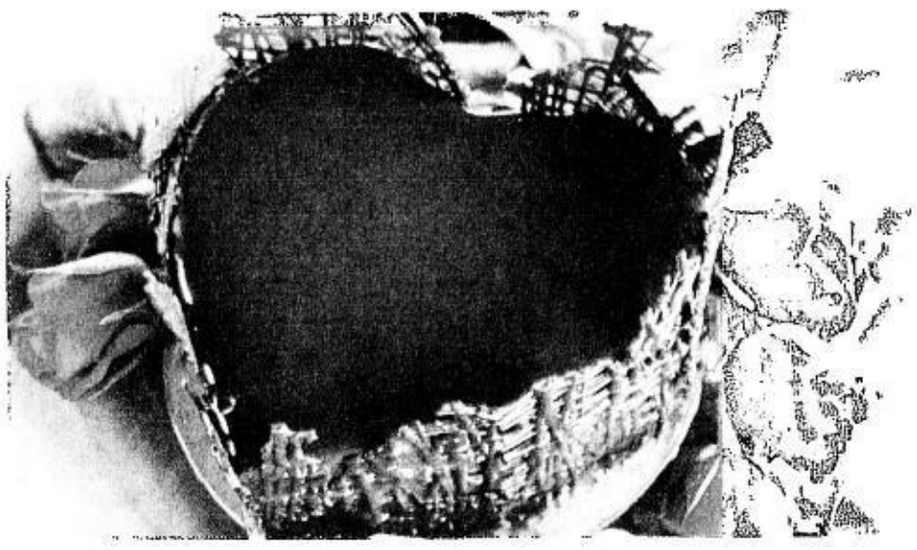
LIFESTYLE

Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle

Editor **Chelo Banal-Formoso**

sms feedback: inquirer life name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) **or email us at** lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

The food is important but so are the roses, the wine, the music and the ambiance



SPLENDIDO Taal Golf Club in Tagaytay City offers a Valentine lunch or dinner while lovers enjoy a panoramic view of Taal Volcano and lake. Splendido's culinary team has prepared a seven-course menu that is available for lunch or dinner Feb. 14-18. Fresh roses will be given to women diners, while the men get a heart-shaped chocolate cake. Splendido Taal is on the Tagaytay Ridge Road near the boundary of Batangas and Cavite. Call 0920-9471840.

Once more, with feelings— a guide to Valentine's Day dining

THE PENINSULA MANILA'S The Lobby offers dinner buffet 6:30-10 p.m. at P1,400+ (adult) and P840+ (kids below 12 years old). The Old Manila has prepared a five-course set dinner menu for P3,550+ (adult) and P2,010+ (kids) while Mi Piace offers a three-course set dinner menu for P1,350+ (adult) and P810+ (kids). Spices offers a la carte menu 6-11 p.m. Nielsen's dinner buffet costs P1,250+ (adult) and P750+ (kid). Long-stemmed red roses and boxes of Peninsula chocolates await women diners on Valentine's Day. Call 8872888 for reservations.

SOFITEL PHILIPPINE PLAZA MANILA'S Spiral lets you have a Valentine dinner in the City of Lights with "Paris, Mon Amour" Feb. 14. Say "je t'aime" (I love you) with the special buffet at P1,888+ per person. A five-course set menu on Spiral Deck is available for P3,000+ per person while a seven-course menu costs P5,000+ per person. The first 200 couples get a special hair care gift from L'Oreal Professionnel Products. Advantage Plus members get 25-percent discount when dining in groups of 10-50 at Spiral or the Poolside Barbecue buffet. Exclusive Arabian tents, "Scheherazade" and "Aladdin," that include private butlers and a bottle each of Moët & Chandon are available for P25,000+ per couple. A Mediterranean-theme buffet dinner available for P2,888+ per person includes a glass of champagne. Call 5515555 local 1913 or 1247 or 8326999/8326940 or 0920-9082171/0920-9082169.

CENTURY PARK HOTEL'S Café in the Park, Atrium Lounge and Top of the Century offer a special five-course dinner by executive chef Rudy Velasco. Priced at P1,800, it includes Roulade of Pink Salmon and Yellow Fin Tuna with Dou of Sauces, served with Mesclun and Pomelo Salad with Red Beets Dressing; Valentino's Dream Soup; Gigolo's Favorite, a fusion of US Fillet Mignon of Beef with Foie Gras; Surfer's Desire, pan-seared salmon fillet Mediterranean-style served with Roasted Bell Peppers and Olive Basil Sauce; and The Sweets Symphony, Apricot Cheesecake and Strawberry Milleuille with Mint Sauce. Special lunch or dinner buffet is available for P950+ (adult) and P550+ (kids). Valentine's Day special cakes and chocolates are available Feb. 9-15. Call 5288888.

AZZURRO BISTRO offers Mediterranean dinner for P1,150+ per person. The menu includes Pesto Cheese & Walnut with Grilled Flat Pita, Cream of Broccoli with Smoked Eel Cappuccino Soup and Greek Horiatiki Salad. For main entrée, Azzurro offers choice from among Duo of Seared Scallops and Tenderloin Steak served with Crisp Asparagus Spears; Risotto Gamberoni, a duo of prawns and smoked Spanish chorizo on Saffron Risotto; and Pan-seared Shiitake and Chicken Breast stuffed with Garlic Creamed Spinach and Feta set on Wild Rice Risotto. For dessert, Azzurro has Duo of Chocolate Decadence and Baileys Strawberry Trifle. Also included with the Valentine menu is a glass of Sparkling Martini Asti Spumante. Women diners get long-stemmed red roses. The promo runs Feb. 9-17. Call 6387878 local 8446/ 8207 or 6371440/ 6315234. Azzurro Bistro @ The Linden Suites is at 37 San Miguel Ave., Ortigas Center, Pasig City.

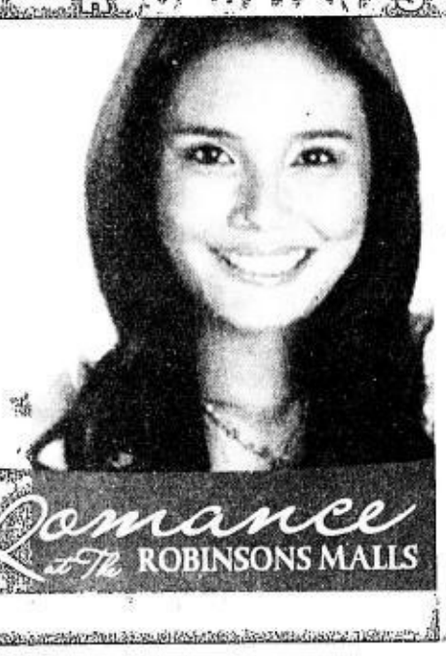
INTERCONTINENTAL MANILA'S Prince Albert Rotisserie offers a five-course European set dinner menu for P2,500+ per person. Choices include Meli Melo of appetizers, Mussel Soup, L'Hirondelle or Shiitake Pigeon Consomme, Grapefruit Ice Crystals, Smoked Braised Sea Bass Fillet with Wine and Spanish Saffron or the house specialty, American Rib-eye. Café Jeepney offers a buffet of local favorites for P1,400+ per person. A set dinner menu prepared by executive chef Patrick Fournes will also be served for P1,900+ per person. Call 8159711.

MANDARIN ORIENTAL'S Tin Hau offers special Valentine dinner set menus at P1,288+, P1,488+ and P1,688+ per person, inclusive of a special take-home Valentine gift. The hotel's Paseo Uno offers dinner buffet at P1,588+ per person; and P2,188+ per person, inclusive of a glass of Moet et Chandon. The Tivoli offers a seven-course dinner Feb. 13-15 at P3,000+ per person, inclusive of a glass of Moet et Chandon. Long-stemmed

ONCE MORE/ C2

KIMPURA Japanese Restaurant celebrates Valentine's Day with "A Day of Wine & Bento" offer. The restaurant's Japanese chef has prepared a special bento meal for two that includes mixed sashimi or California roll special, *agedashi dofu*, *sakana furai* (breaded fish fillet), beef *yakiniku*, *miso* soup, mixed fried rice and dessert, with two complimentary glasses of French wine. Price is P1,200 per set. Kimpura is at Greenhills Shopping Center (beside Unimart), San Juan (7218816) and 2/L, Glorietta 2, Ayala Center, Makati City (8924456).

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS



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ISABEL OLI

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CEBU: Juna, Basement 1&2 Ayala Center 231-3254
GREENHILLS: Anna, 27F Atlanta Ctr. #31 Annapolis 726-6505
LEGASPI VILLAGE: Lani/Dianne, GF Zeta Bldg. Salcedo St. 893-8935
MALATE: Daisy/Mhaye, 6F Adriatico Square Adriatico, Manila 536-0619
MEGAMALL: Ruby/Toni, 2F Bldg. A Mandaluyong 631-3869
PASAY ROAD: Val/Kaizy, 1032 Arnaiz Ave. cor. Hernandez St. 887-1335
PASIG: Abbie, Restaurant Ave. Marcos Hi-Way 681-5333
SM NORTH: Mitch, 2F Annex Bldg. Quezon City 929-5429
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SM NORTH: Mitch 929 54 29

Sweets for the sweet

GET IN THE MOOD FOR ROMANCE with these new recipes and concoctions from San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center and San Mig Coffee. Visit www.mygreatfood.com.

Rugelach

Dough:
1 c Magnolia Cream Cheese
1 c Magnolia Gold Butter
1 tsp vanilla
1/3 c refined sugar
2¼ c Purefoods Baron All-purpose Flour
2 tbsp San Mig Instant Coffee
Filling:
1 160-g Magnolia Bestfruits Strawberry Jam
¾ c cashew nuts, chopped
¾ c chocolate chips
Egg wash:
1 pc egg
1/8 c Magnolia Fresh Milk

Combine cream cheese and butter at low speed, until smooth but still dotted with cream cheese and butter. Mix in the vanilla and sugar.

In a separate bowl, mix all-purpose flour and instant coffee then add it to the cream cheese mixture. Continue to mix until just incorporated.

Gather dough into a ball. Wrap with Glad cling wrap and chill. Cut into four equal pieces.

On a lightly floured surface, roll out one piece shaping into a 12 x 4 rectangle, spread with 2 tbsp of jam. Sprinkle with chopped nuts and chocolate chips. Roll out into a log. Cut into three pieces per log.

Brush surface with egg wash and bake at 350°F for 15 minutes or until done.

Makes 12 pieces.

RUGELACH

BANANA Coffee Cooler

Banana Coffee Cooler

4 tbsp San Mig Instant Coffee Syrup
1 pc *lakatan* banana
¼ c simple syrup
1 scoop Magnolia Vanilla Ice Cream
2 rosettes whipped cream (topping)
2 tbsp caramel syrup (topping)

In a blender, pour ice cubes, San Mig Instant Coffee syrup, simple syrup and *lakatan* banana. Blend until smooth.

Add Magnolia Vanilla Ice Cream and blend. Pour in a tall or Collins glass and top with whipped cream and drizzle with caramel syrup.

San Mig Instant Coffee syrup:

Use 2 tbsp San Mig Instant Coffee powder for every 1 c of warm water. Let cool and use accordingly.

Simple syrup:

Use 1 c of sugar for every 1 c of hot water. Let cool and use accordingly.

Choco Espresso Cake

Brownie cake base:
¾ c cocoa powder
¾ c Magnolia Gold Butter
¼ c maple syrup
2 tbsp Magnolia Nutri-oil
3 pc whole eggs
1 c sugar
¾ c Purefoods Baron All-purpose Flour
1 c chopped walnuts
Light coffee buttercream:
1½ c Magnolia Gold Butter
6 pc egg yolks
1 c sugar
1½ c evaporated milk
4 tbsp Kahlua or coffee liqueur
2 tbsp Tondeña Rum
3 tbsp San Mig Instant Coffee
1 c all-purpose cream, whipped
Chocolate tiles for garnish

Brownie cake base:

Pre-heat oven at 350°F. Line a 9" round pan with Glad bake paper. Combine cocoa powder, butter, maple syrup and oil in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat until smooth. Remove from heat and cool.

Beat eggs and sugar until light. Gradually add in the cooled chocolate mixture and mix until smooth. Add in the flour and continue mixing at low speed. Fold in chopped walnuts. Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes or until done.

Light mocha buttercream:

Cream butter until light. In a saucepan, combine egg yolks, sugar and evaporated milk. Cook until thick. Set aside and cool.

Combine coffee liqueur, rum and instant coffee and mix very well. Add this to your milk mixture. Gradually add in streams of your cooled milk mixture to the creamed butter and continue creaming until it becomes light and smooth.

Set aside 1 c of this mixture and add the whipped all-purpose cream to make it lighter. Set aside for the frosting.

To assemble:

Divide the cake into two layers. Save the other half. Line an 8" ring mold with foil. Place the other half at the bottom of the ring mold. Pour remaining coffee buttercream and top with the buttercream that was lightened with all-purpose cream. Chill and allow to set. Garnish with rosettes of buttercream and chocolate tiles.

Makes 12 servings.

CHOCO Espresso Cake

HAZELNUT Caramel Machiatto

Hazelnut Caramel Machiatto

4 tbsp San Mig Instant Coffee Syrup
2 tbsp simple syrup
¼ tsp hazelnut syrup
½ c Magnolia Fresh Milk
2 tbsp caramel syrup (topping)

Pour San Mig Instant Coffee syrup, simple syrup and hazelnut syrup in a coffee cup.

Warm Magnolia Fresh Milk and put in a blender. Blend until frothy.

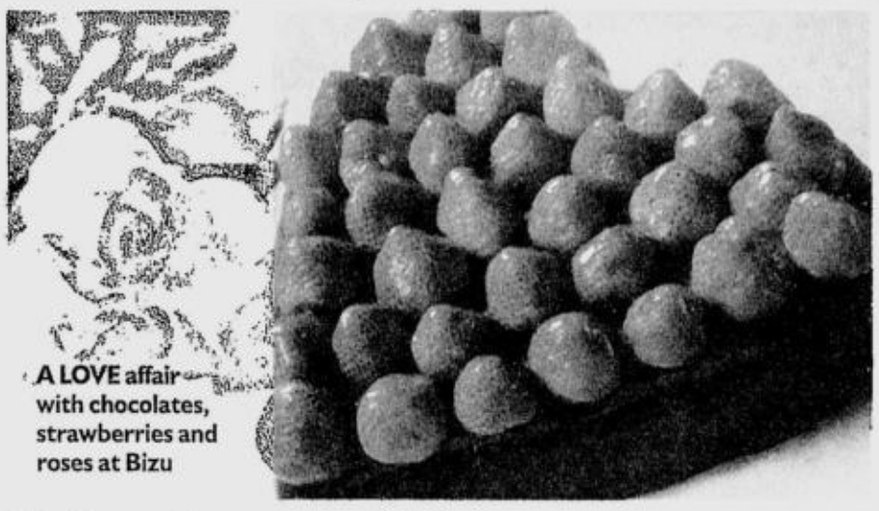
Pour milk with the froth in the coffee cup. Top with caramel syrup.

San Mig Instant Coffee syrup:

Use 2 tbsp San Mig Instant Coffee Powder for every 1 c of warm water. Let cool and use accordingly.

Simple syrup:

Use 1 c of sugar for every 1 c of hot water. Let cool and use accordingly.



A LOVE affair with chocolates, strawberries and roses at Bizu

Cakes for special someone

VALENTINE BECOMES MORE SPECIAL with long-stem roses from Ecuador in addition to cakes and pastries at Bizu.

Show your love with roses and Romance—dark-chocolate truffle cake with fresh strawberries. Other sweet choices include heart-shaped Strawberry Chiboust or 30 pieces of Valrhona Truffles in special jeweled boxes. A box of 14 Macarons de Paris now includes the new Dark Cherry Chocolate flavor.

Roses and pastries may be purchased separately. For dinner, Bizu offers aphrodisiac-theme dishes like Baked Oyster Rockefeller; Avocado and Prawn Salad; Dulong Caviar served with Ecoutrements; Cream of Pistachio and Asparagus Soup; and Beef Consomme with Scallops.

Choices for main entree include Tiger Prawns with Saffron Mussel Sauce in Risotto Caviar; USDA Angus Rib-Eye Steak with Baked Potato Topped with Sour Cream and Chives; or Slow-cooked Chicken in Olive Oil and Garlic with Linguine Vongole.

Bizu is at Greenbelt 2, 7572498; Alabang Town Center, 8092498; Glorietta 4, 7572086; Greenhills Promenade, 7242498 or 7262496; and SM Mall of Asia, 5560858.

1st Pinoy Valentine

Krispy Kreme marks its first Philippine Valentine with four variants of its heart-sprinkled doughnuts available Feb. 8-28. The variants are Chocolate Strawberry Filled with Sprinkles, Cream Cheese Strawberry Filled with Sprinkles, Chocolate Iced with Sprinkles and Cream Cheese with Sprinkles. With every purchase of a dozen assorted doughnuts including the featured items, the customer gets four Valentine cards and free doughnut coupons. Krispy Kreme is at Bonifacio High Street, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig; and G/F, SM Megamall, Bldg. B.

Sweet heart cakes

Make Valentine's Day special with a gift that will truly show the loved one how much you care. Goldilocks' heart-shaped Strawberry Buttercream Cake is a pink chiffon cake with vanilla buttercream filling and decorated with multicolored chocolate roses and vermicelli candies. For those who prefer the classics, Goldilocks also has heart-shaped versions of its best-selling chocolate and marble cakes.

Once more, with feelings—a guide to dining

From page C1

red roses for the ladies come with this Valentine offer. The Mandarin Deli offers a Valentine set menu Feb. 8-14, while the MO Café and Deli (Gateway Mall) offers a choice of two set menus Feb. 14 for only P750+ per person. Call 7508888 local 2401.

THE HERITAGE HOTEL Manila offers a five-course dinner and wine buffet, "Moonlight and Magic" (P1,888+ per person), at the 10/F Roof Terrace overlooking Manila Bay, and Bossa Nova Live Concert buffet dinner (P1,399+ per person) at Restaurant Riviera. Choices include, for starters, Salmon and Garoupa Canneloni, Baked Oyster and Five-spice Lamb; Essence of American Ginseng with Ravioli for soup; Champagne Sherbet with Pink Peppercorns for Intermezzo; Oven-baked Lapu-Lapu with Mussel Otak with Curry Beurre Blanc or Roast Medallions of Beef wrapped in Bacon enhanced by Marsala for the main course; and puff pastry with Chiffonade of Glaced Fruits, Dates and Toasted Almonds with Amaretto Vanillin Sauce. Call 8548888.

DUSIT HOTEL NIKKO Valentine dinner buffet at The Café is priced at P900+ per person. Benjarong has a Valentine set menu of Thai specialties for P2,300+ (for two persons). Chef Tun also has five a la carte gastronomic treats Feb. 16-28. Benkay's Chef Tomiyama has a special Valentine six-course dinner set menu with a specially packed gift, a Strawberry Cheesecake for only P1,500+ per person. Thien Duong's Valentine six-course dinner set menu prepared by Chef Nguyen is inclusive of one glass of red or white wine per person. Traditional Filipino dishes at Fiesta San Miguel on Valentine's Day come with a glass of red or white wine or a 0.3-liter of Fiesta San Miguel's popular fresh brewed beer. Women get special gifts. Call 8673333.

THE BELLEVUE HOTEL'S Café d' Asie has special buffet dinner Feb. 14. Dishes include Spaghetti Al Funghi, Black Gindara Steaks and Lamb Satay. The hotel's Poolside Barbecue offers an array of off-the-grill favorites. Call 7718181.

DISCOVERY SUITES offers Valentine's Day Suite and Dinner Package for only P5,500+. The package includes a five-course Italian set menu at Serendipity Lounge, a one-bedroom suite with deluxe amenities. Walk-in diners may avail of the special set dinner menu for P850+ per person inclusive of sparkling wine. Call 6838222.

DISCOVERY COUNTRY SUITES. Verbena restaurant chef David Pardo de Ayala has prepared Passions Set Dinner Menu, a six-course menu at P1500+ per person at this Tagaytay hotel. Call (046)4134567 or, in Manila, 6838383.

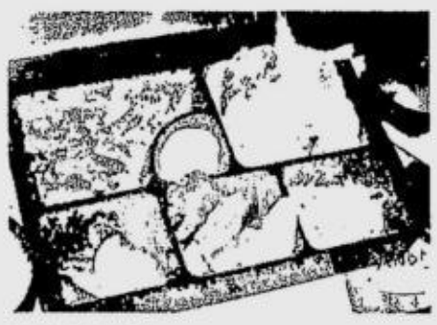
SUPER BOWL of China has a special treat for couples this Valentine. Until Feb. 17, a minimum single-receipt dine-in purchase at any Super Bowl of China outlet entitles diner to a free *halo-halo*. Super Bowl offers generous servings of dishes like Honey-Glazed Pork Ribs, Three Cup Chicken, Sliced Beef with Broccoli, Crispy Fried Chicken, BBQ Pork Asado, Hunan Tofu, Deep-fried Cuttlefish with Spicy Salt, and Szechuan Scallops.

GUMBO (2/L Mall of Asia and 2/L The Block, SM City North Edsa) has three special dishes for Valentine: Steamed Alaskan King Crab, Blackened Angus Rib-Eye Steak and Steamed Chilean Sea Bass. Order any of these dishes to get one free dessert of your choice: Strawberry-Choco Cheesecake, New Orleans Bread Pudding a la Mode, Key Lime, Bananas Foster, Chocolate Mousse, Hot Chocolate Cake a la Mode, among others. Call 5560238-39 or 4420106.

BLUE BAY RESTAURANT (corner of T.M. Kalaw Ave. [South Road] and Parade Street, Rizal Park, Ermita, Manila) offers a buffet of Filipino, Asian and international dishes for only P430 net per person. Guests on Valentine's Day get a free Valentine drink and a cuddly stuffed Blue Bay bear. Call 5250514 and 4007437.

MEXICALI has prepared several Valentine specials from tender and flavorful chicken or beef tenderloin fajitas, grilled chicken or pork chops with Mexican rice, chicken enchiladas and chicken and shrimp fajitas with tortillas and sides served with deserts such as bananas caramel & cream and chocolate-hazelnut quesadillas. All meal combos are good for two and served with free red hibiscus iced teas. Promo runs Feb. 12-18. Mexicali branches are at Glorietta, RCBC Plaza, SM Megamall, SM Mall of Asia, The Block SM City North Edsa, Eastwood Libis, The Promenade Greenhills, Robinson's Place Manila, and Felipe Building, Poblacion, Makati.

DENCIO'S BAR & GRILL RESTAURANT at Terraza Dasma, Robinsons Place Dasmariñas; and at Robinsons Starmills Pampanga, offers a romantic al fresco dinner Feb. 14-16. Women diners get a free choco "rose bud." The "3 for P100" promo on San Mig Light Beer is ongoing. Call 5296152, 2467031.



SANBASHI Japanese Restaurant at the corner of TM Kalaw Avenue, (South Road) and Parade Street, Rizal Park, Ermita, Manila, offers its all-new steak bento consisting of beef tenderloin, *yasai itame* (stir-fried vegetables), tempura, *saba shioyaki* (grilled mackerel), tuna, salmon and *tamago* (omelet) sashimi, *kani kyuri* (crabstick) salad, *miso* soup and rice. On Valentine's Day, diners get a 15-percent discount on second orders of any item (dish). Call 4006757.

THE CONSUMER

A different kind of truth

By Linda B. Bolido

FORMER UNITED STATES VICE President Al Gore may know of an inconvenient truth but some advertisers have a different kind of truth.

A news organization has reported that a major multinational corporation was censured by the United Kingdom's advertising watchdog for claiming that 80 percent of dentists recommended its toothpaste.

In censuring the company, the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) said the ads made it appear that 80 percent of dentists recommended its product over and above other brands.

But the ASA said: "However, we understood that the survey questions allowed each participant to recommend several toothpastes and brands, not just a single choice."

The ASA said a competitor brand was, in fact, recommended almost as much as the product of the censured company, thus, "we concluded that the claim misleadingly implied 80 percent of dentists" recommended the toothpaste in question.

This reminds me of an experience I had when I was doing consultancy work for an international organization.

An advertising company wanted to take photographs of the façade of the organization's building, particularly the signage.

The concept was to cite findings of studies undertaken by the organization in the advertisement being produced. Though the findings did not endorse any specific product, it was obvious that the company, by including the organization in the promotional material, wanted to use its credibility to give its product more stature.

Knowing that many people often overlook the fine print, the organization's logo in an ad could have given the idea the product was being officially endorsed by the international group.

Needless to say, the request was turned down.

The moral of the story is do not expect absolute truth in advertising, though it is supposed to be a cardinal rule.

And take so-called "survey" results, especially when used in promotional materials with a large dose of skepticism. As the UK agency found out, questions could be phrased in such a way as to elicit the answers wanted by whoever paid for the survey.

This is true for other surveys. How the survey is structured, what questions are asked, who are the respondents can affect the results.

Surveys are useful, they do provide some helpful information. But do not take their findings as gospel truth.

No receipt

If you want to report any commercial/business establishment that does not issue official receipts, you can write or call the Bureau of Internal Revenues through:

Taxpayer Information and Education Division (TIED), Room 101, BIR National Office Bldg., BIR Road, Diliman, QC. Call 9263866, 9243245, 9817250 or 9818888 (BIR CC). E-mail no-or-complaint@bir.gov.ph or fax 9243245.

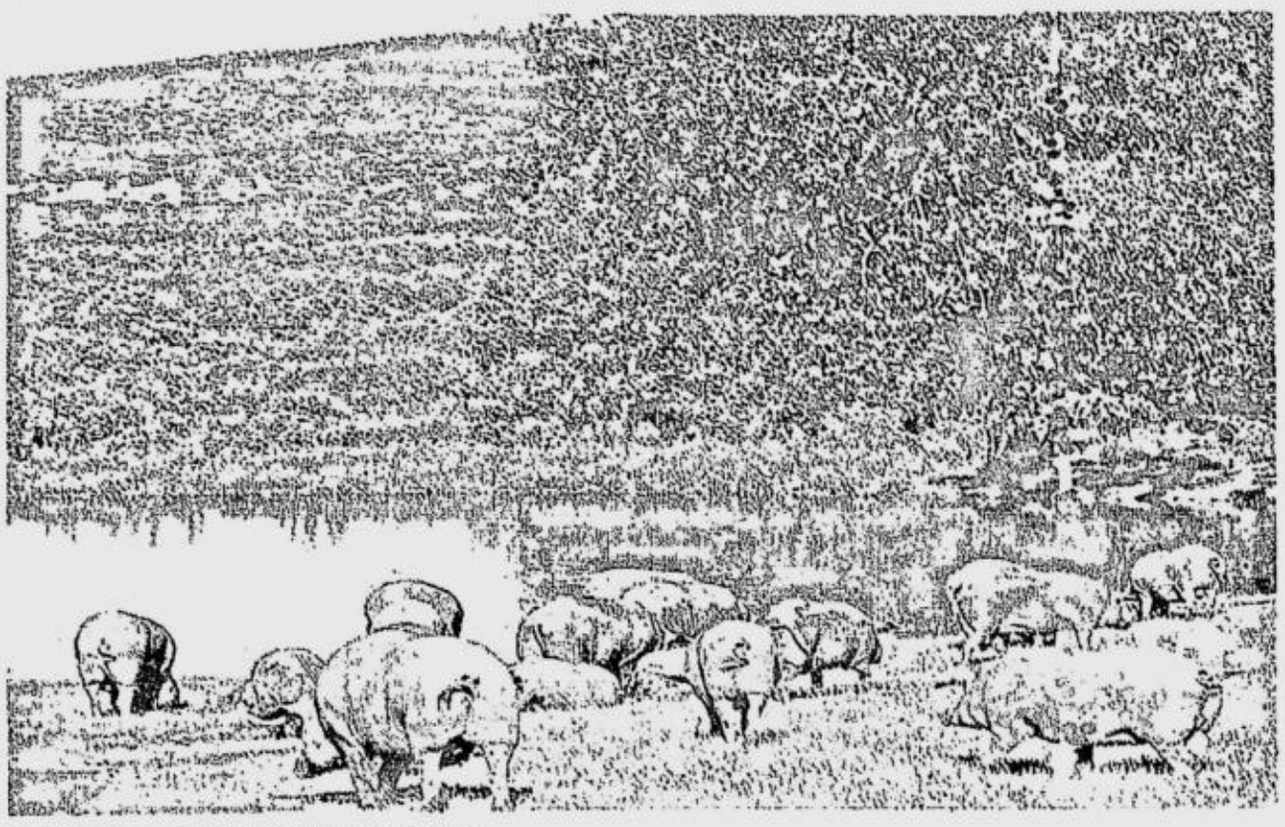
Kudos

Bikers want to commend the SM mall chain for providing bike racks where they can leave their bicycles safely. The racks, according to e-mail writers, are close to the malls' security guards, increasing their sense of security after they have locked their bikes.

The bikers say SM can make this a marketing come-on, in fact, considering Metro Manila has some 50,000 bikers. At the SM Mall of Asia alone, they say, there are already thousands of bikers so SM may even want to sponsor biking events to promote the place.

Biking has become more than just a sport and exercise. With people becoming more environment-conscious and with the rising cost of living, biking is becoming the mode of transport for a growing number of people. In fact, this is the advocacy of the firefly-brigade (www.Fireflybrigade.org).

Bikers say they have become a big consumer force that commercial establishments have to start considering. Malls, restaurants, shops, have to start thinking about becoming more biker-friendly. They will also be doing the environment a big favor.



IBERIAN hogs in their natural environment

BELLOTA acorn

Extended curing time makes some Spanish ham varieties the best in the world

KITCHEN RESCUE
Reggie Aspiras

Treasures of Spain

Part 2

TWO TYPES OF HOGS ARE USED FOR THE Spanish *jamón* : Iberian and white hogs.

As important as the hog strain is what the animals eat. Jamón de Bellota—ham from acorns, the most priced of Spanish *jamóns*—are range-fed Iberian hogs, each consuming some 20 pounds of acorns a day.

The process

From October to February, the pigs are left to graze freely and feed on acorns on the *dehesa* (countryside), a period known as *montanera* (usually a pre-slaughtering phase).

After slaughtering, the ham is preserved and dried by salting. It is then washed and hung to dry, a process known as *asentamiento*. The ham is cured/dried in *secaderos* or dry houses. After that, the ham is ready.

There is an extra process known as *añejado*. This is what sets the Spanish apart from Italian and French hams. It is optional, done by the finest ham-makers and extending the curing process for some seven to 13 months to achieve the best flavor possible. This makes these Spanish varietals the best in the world!

Types of Jamón Serrano

• **Serrano/Curado/Reserva/Extra**—"Cured ham" from white hogs, fed with a mixed diet of commercial compound feed. The terms *serrano*, *curado*, *reserva* do not denote quality or curing time.

• **Ibérico/De Pata Negra**—Solely hams from Iberian hogs are allowed to be called Jamón Ibérico, which are more refined than the ordinary Jamón Serrano. The hogs are usually fed with commercial feed, unless *bellota* is mentioned, which would then mean they were also fed with acorns. As of 2006, the use of the term Jamón de Pata Negra was prohibited to avoid confusion.

• **Iberico de Recebo**—Iberian hog is fed with a mix of acorns and commercial compound feed during the final months prior to slaughtering. It is medium priced with good flavor. Value-for-money ham.

• **Iberico de Bellota/Iberico de Montanera**—Iberian hog is fed solely with *bellota* (acorns) and herbs to produce the Rolls Royce of hams. Excellent flavor! The differences between one brand and the other are curing time and the technical know-how of those who produce it.

• **Paletilla**—Paletilla is the front leg. *Jamóns* are made from the hind leg of a pig. Technically, *paletilla* should not be confused with *jamón*. Some *paletillas* are excellent, made in the exact same fashion as *jamón*. *Paletillas* are smaller, fattier, hence, cheaper.

• **Denominación de Origen (DO)**—This is the hams' quality seal. Only five regions qualify, thus, Jamón de Huelva (including the famous Jabugo ham), Jamón de la Dehesa de Extremadura, Jamón de Teruel, Jamón de Guijuelo and Jamón de Trevélez.

Though DO is certainly a guarantee of quality, think not that all hams with DO's are Bellota nor should you think only great hams have DO's. Northern Cordoba's Valle de los Pedroches is an excellent Bellota without a DO and sold at half the price.

Good quality 'jamón'

• Leg must be hairless, long and thin. In some cases, a slim V-cut.

• Must weigh approximately 6-7.5 kilos.

• Check for dark hooves for Ibericos.

• Look for the DO and check the date stamped on the leg to estimate length of curing time. The best are cured two years onwards. Yes, expect it to be very expensive. A little less or just about a thousand euros per leg, may be even a bit more.

• Fingers must sink into the flesh.

• Fat must be smooth, tender. It must be soft to the touch, brilliant, aromatic, with pleasant flavor.

• It should not be salty nor sweet but delicate. Texture must not be sinewy.

• When sliced, the best ones have strips of fat or marbling throughout. The more marbling, the more acorns it consumed. Meat varies from a dark deep pinkish-red to purple.

Storing and eating

• Store at 10-15 °C.

• Whole legs are best kept hung or on a *jamónera*.

• Brush cut portion of the *jamon* with olive oil and cover with cling wrap before storing. This helps keep it fresh. If molds form, wash off with warm water.

• Slice ham just before serving and serve at room temperature.

• Hand-sliced are best. Must be paper-thin. A kilo of ham should give you a hundred paper-thin slices. The slice must be transparent enough to show the knife's silhouette.

• All slices must contain inter-muscular fat to make them more succulent.

• Do not slice with serrated knives.

• Stored properly, *jamón* may last up to a year. If it becomes tough, use it in your favorite Spanish recipes.

Good news

Recent medical studies show that consumption of *jamón* of natural origin does not increase cholesterol levels thanks to its organoleptic properties, as its fatty acid content is similar to that of vegetable.

Thanks to the Regulatory Council of the Protected Denomination of Origin—"Dehesa Extremadura"—for all its help.

Next Week: Tasting notes on Spanish olive oil and wine

E-mail the author at raspiras@inquirer.com.ph.

IN GOOD quality *jamón*, the leg must be hairless, long and thin.

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Website: www.iscahm.com

Sweet Valentine gifts

SAN MIGUEL PUREFOODS CULINARY CENter starts its "Baking Made Easier" series with "Sweets for My Sweet," 1:30-4:30 p.m., Feb. 12, at the San Miguel Purefoods Culinary Center, Legazpi cor. Eagle Sts., Barrio Ugong, Pasig City.

Participants learn the basics of making miniature cakes from scratch, as well as muffin and cookie preparations using premixes from San Miguel Mills.

Fee is P500. Those who attend three consecutive baking classes can attend the fourth class for free.

The baking series also includes "Bread Bites: Bread and Doughnuts Ideas," March 23; "Stovetop Creations," April 27; and "No-Bake Desserts and Oven-Toaster Treats," May 11. It is sponsored by Glad, Sunnex, Ariston and GE Appliances. Visit www.mygreatfood.com; or call 6322000, 6719876 locals 2771 and 402.

Vampires need not enrol

The Reggie Aspiras School of Culinary Arts will conduct the following classes:

Feb. 9—"Not for vampires!" The best garlic bread ever!—Creamy Garlic Soup, Garlic Chip Roasted Prawn, Garlic-Stuffed Roast Beef, Pork Roast Crown Roast with Garlic Jelly, Garlic Chicken Served with Garlic Salad, sides, dessert

Feb. 10—"From the Ocean '07"—Appetizer Platter of Lapu-Lapu Salad, Seafood Terrine and Salmon Mousse with Toasts, points and condiments; Wasabi-crusted Fish and Oyster Chips with Sauces, Oriental-style Fish Fillets, Coriander Baked Fish, sides

Feb. 12—"Tabasco" (all-new)—Spiced Orange Chicken Lollipops, Chili Chicken with Cowboy Beans, Honey-Roasted Ribs, Brined Barbecue Pork Chop, Steaks

Feb. 14—"Shrimps '07" (all-new)—San Miguel Beer-Steamed Suahe with Sauces, Deep-fried Whole Prawn Wrapped with Green Onion, Sesame Shrimp Forcemeat, Shrimp Paste-Sautéed Prawn, Chili Drunken Shrimp, sides. Call 9289296 and 9273008.

Cooking classes

Maya Kitchen will hold cooking classes on "Brownie Plus Baking from Prepared Mixes," at 9 a.m.-12 nn and "Basic Waitering," 9 a.m.-4 p.m., Feb. 10. Visit Maya Kitchen at 8/F, Liberty Bldg., A. Arnaiz Ave., Makati City. Call 8921185 or 8925011 local 108.

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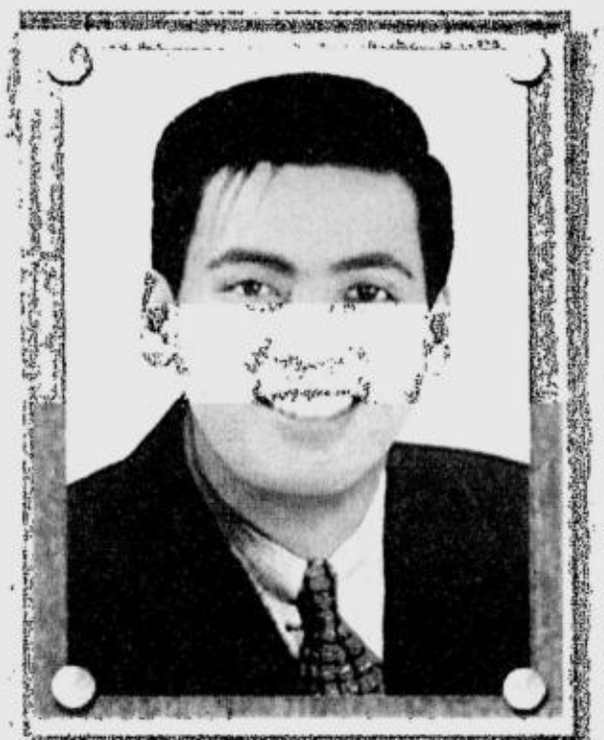

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COUNTRY COOKING
Micky Fenix

Late for lunch in Arayat

After tasting an extremely good *ensaimada*, the invitation to taste more of this town's cooking was accepted without hesitation

I CAN'T COUNT THE NUMBER of times I've gotten lost in Pampanga.

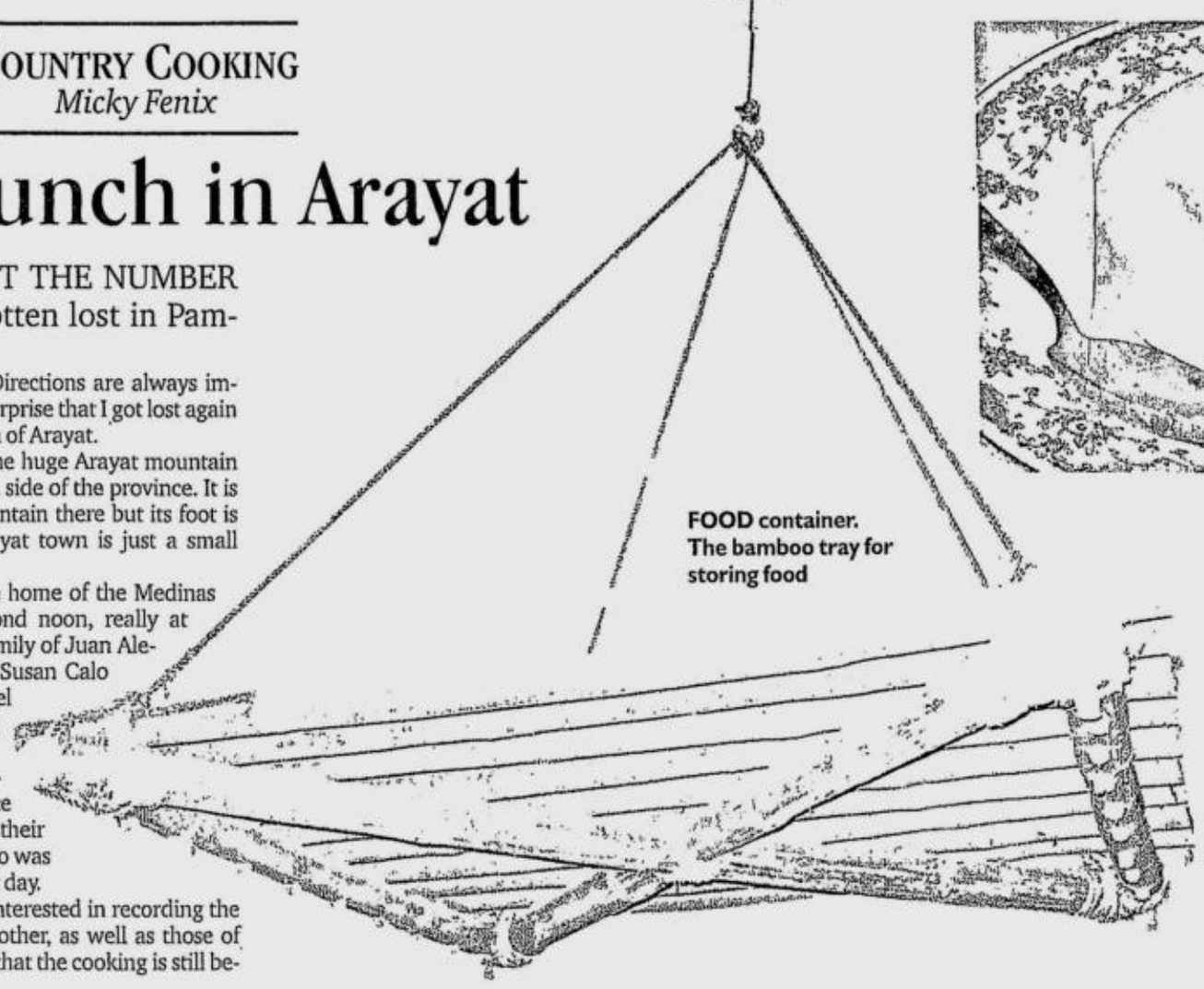
Maps don't work. Directions are always imprecise. So it was no surprise that I got lost again on the way to the town of Arayat.

It didn't help that the huge Arayat mountain dominated the eastern side of the province. It is the one and only mountain there but its foot is so expansive and Arayat town is just a small place in that area.

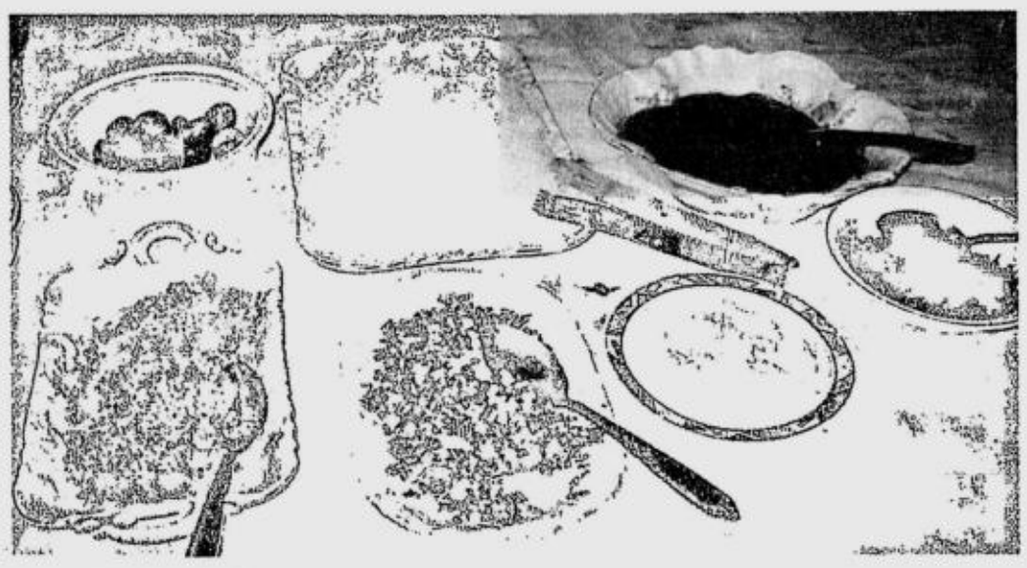
So our lunch at the home of the Medinas happened hours beyond noon, really at *merienda* time. The family of Juan Alejandrino Medina and Susan Calo Medina (of TV's "Travel Time") was having *tsokolate* and *duman*, thick chocolate beverage with the special rice mixed in. But it was their son, Marc Medina, who was my culinary guide that day.

He's the one most interested in recording the recipes of his grandmother, as well as those of the clan, making sure that the cooking is still being done.

The oldest part of the house, he tells me, is the kitchen. The center of the kitchen is the old wood-fired clay stove. With the job of cooking finished much earlier, they were already cold though still holding some of the pans used. The more modern gas stove on one side was used for heating things.



FOOD container. The bamboo tray for storing food



Moveable 'pantry'

A contraption hangs above the work table, a big bamboo tray for food so animals can't get to it. This is used in many old homes, though some use baskets instead. A simple pulley with a rope brings the container up or down.

Whatever is cooked in this house has been handed down from Marc's grandmother, Gertrudis Medina Alejandrino, who married Dr. Esteban Sugay Medina. His grandparents were cousins, hence, the Medina in both their names.

The couple still "greets" visitors through framed photographs, the first faces you see when you go up the stairs to the receiving room.

Marc sent me something he wrote for another book that enumerated some of the "everyday Pampango dishes" or, as they called it in Pampango, *pang aldo-aldo*, that his grandmother cooked: "*tidtad bigac* (pork stewed in its own blood), *tidtad baca* (a soup of ground beef and pig's blood soured with *kamias*), *afritada* (chicken and pork braised in vinegar, tomatoes, red peppers and annatto seeds), *suam mais* (a thick soup of native corn and squash blossoms), *asado* (chicken and pork soured with vinegar, tomatoes and soy sauce), *estofado* (pig's trotters braised with sugar and herbs), and *burong asan* (fermented soft rice and fish).

Save for the *burong asan*, the dishes were not on the menu during our Arayat visit. But for those of us eating that very delayed lunch, what was on the dining table was worth the long trip and getting lost.

Har-bringhe-r

The harbinger of good things to come was the *bringhe*, which was unfolded from its banana leaf and Manila paper wrapper in the kitchen.

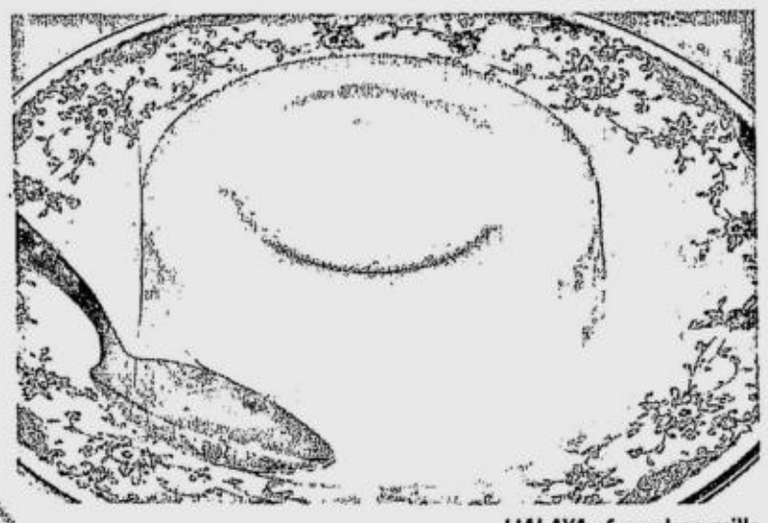
Bringhe is glutinous rice cooked in coconut milk, flavored with native chicken, made yellow with turmeric. Patches of black crust form on top after a long slow cooking but it is inverted when served. It was to be our rice eaten with the other dishes on the table.

There were river shrimps cooked in coconut milk. Susan said coconut milk was not very often used in Pampango cooking.

There was *ukoy*, each piece with one big shrimp instead of the usual small shrimps in other places.

It was a challenge for the younger people with us to try the delicious "exotic" mole crickets or *camaru* cooked as *adobo* then fried.

Marc wrote how his grandfather loved the *camaru* as well as other exotica—"*ebun barag* (boiled eggs of large swamp lizards), *dumará* (wild ducks braised in onions, olives and white wine), and *burong talangka* (live small freshwater crabs doused in boiling water and fermented overnight with salt)."



HALAYA of carabao milk

What looked like *pancit palabok* or *luglog* is called *pancit langlang* in that part of the mountain. It has the thin white noodles and the orange sauce made with *achuete* (annatto), pounded head of shrimps and pig's cheeks. The garnishing includes crushed *chicharon*, chopped spring onions, sliced hard-boiled eggs and toasted garlic.

The *pancit langlang* should be eaten with *sisig babi*, according to Susan. But it's not the *sisig* that we know. It's more like *tokwa't baboy* without the *tokwa*.

Marc's recipe has "pig's snout, ear and forehead, soaked in vinegar, soy sauce, garlic, onions, sugar and black pepper." We didn't get to taste the combination because the *sisig* was gone by the time we got there. But I can imagine what it must have tasted like, having eaten it many times before.

Better than panna cotta

We were hungry and ate too fast so we were full right away. But we still had space for dessert. When it was brought out, we looked at each other unbelievingly. On a small plate was a white mound they called *halayang gatas ng kalabaw*. It looked like a firmer *panna cotta* and certainly tasted better than its Italian counterpart.

But that wasn't the end of our lunch. We were asked if we wanted the *halo-halo* Arayat was known for, the one with *pastillas de leche*. The Kabigting family version is about the richest *halo-halo* I've ever had.

The lunch was the result of a happy accident when I strayed into the Makati City Salcedo Market entrance where Susan and Marc were seated and having some friends taste the Medina *ensaimada* that's cooked only during the Christmas season. You can imagine how rich it is from Marc's list of what went into it: "36 egg yolks, 7 cups of flour, 5 cups of canned butter and a small ball of Dutch Edam cheese."

After having that extremely good *ensaimada*, you can understand why the invitation to taste the Arayat home cooking was accepted without hesitation.

So we smiled through that late lunch happy with the cooking and the fact that traditional dishes were still being done in the Medina house at the foot of Mount Arayat.

E-mail the author at pinoyfood04@yahoo.com

GRANDPARENTS' old photographs at the entrance of the house

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Chocolate-flavored dim sum

FOR ITS CHOCOLATE FESTIVAL, Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila's Xin Tian Di Restaurant offers chocolate dim sum consisting of, among others, Chocolate-flavored Baked Custard Tarts, Pear-shaped Chocolate Dumplings, Chocolate Mango Rolls, Chocolate Banana Balls and Sweetened Chocolate Potato Puffs by head dim sum chef Lauro Bulado.

Bulado is responsible for Xin Tian Di's over 40 dim sum choices featured daily in the restaurant's Unlimited Dim sum Lunch buffet. He shares the following recipes with INQUIRER readers.

Xin Tian Di is on the fourth floor of Crowne Plaza Galleria Manila which is at the corner of Ortigas Avenue and Asian Development Bank Avenue in Ortigas Center (tel. 6337222).

Chocolate Potato Puffs

Ingredients
Potatoes 15 g
Oil 5 g
Cornstarch 6 g
Salted egg 1 pc

PEAR-SHAPED Chocolate Dumplings

Chocolate filling 3 tbsp

1. Steam potatoes for 30 minutes then peel.
2. Mash and mix all ingredients (except chocolate filling) to form the dough.
3. Divide the dough into 3 parts and roll out to flatten.
4. Place 1 tbsp of chocolate filling in the center of the dough then fold in half and pleat edges of the dough. Pleat all the way through to seal in the filling.
5. Deep-fry the dough until golden brown. Drain on paper towels and serve hot.

Pear-shaped Chocolate Dumplings

Ingredients
Cornstarch 6 g
Glutinous powder 10 g
Oil 3 g
Sugar 5 g
Dark chocolate 8 g
Water

1. Mix all ingredients (except chocolate) until smooth. Add water as needed to make dough pliable.
2. Divide the dough into 3 parts and roll out to flatten.
3. Place the dark chocolate as filling in the center of the dough. Fold and pleat dough to seal in the chocolate while shaping the dough into miniature pears.
4. Steam pear-shaped dough for 5 minutes. Let cool and serve.

ENTERTAINMENT

Editor **Emmie G. Velarde**

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'As long as a movie is telling a great story, people will watch it—whatever the medium'

FILMMAKER Will Fredo RUDY ESPERAS

The complex 'Compound' at IndieSine

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

WILL FREDO'S INDEPENDENT FEATURE film debut, "Compound," is having its local run this week.

Described as a "modern tragedy/thriller," the movie premiered at the Cleveland International Film Festival and was shown at the Cinemalaya in Manila and Reel Affirmations film fest in Washington DC, where it clinched positive reviews last year.

A former computer engineer in software conglomerate Microsoft, the *balikbayan* writer-director Fredo counts Lino Brocka, David Lynch, David Cronenberg, Lars von Trier and Wong Kar Wai as idols.

"Compound" is running at the IndieSine in Robinsons Galleria until Feb. 13.

What was the biggest challenge in doing "Compound"?

Shedding what I was used to. Coming from the US, I wanted so badly to belong. I even tried to get rid of my accent. Another challenge was making everyone believe in it. Good thing I found people who shared my goals—and generously offered their time and talent.

INQUIRER EXCLUSIVE

How did you elicit the best performance from your actors?

We held auditions. The movie wouldn't have been the same without such a great and supportive ensemble.

What was the feedback in Cleveland?

Overwhelming. Tickets were sold out [and] only 5 to 10 percent [of the buyers] were Filipino. I couldn't help video-taping the audience and they did a wave for me! After that, the other festivals seemed easier. But I still get nervous with every screening.

What are your thoughts on this local run?

I'm lucky that we now have IndieSine. Independent filmmakers need all the support we can get.

Were you inspired by "Melrose Place," Mike de Leon, or David Lynch in making "Compound"?

Wow, that didn't cross my mind. I was so flattered when I read the review [in the INQUIRER] that said as much.

What was the transition from Microsoft to filmmaking like?

Scary. But the desire to make films was so strong, that I had to take the risk. Everyone was against it, especially my family in Manila. They said I would just be wasting my earnings. Funny thing I learned was, managing computer programmers is not much different from directing actors.

Is digital boon or bane?

I truly respect those who insist on using film. But I hope theater owners will see that digital projection is the wave of the future. Research is being done to improve the quality and availability of digital technology to consumers. YouTube is a testament to this. As long as the movie is telling a great story, people will watch it—whatever the medium.

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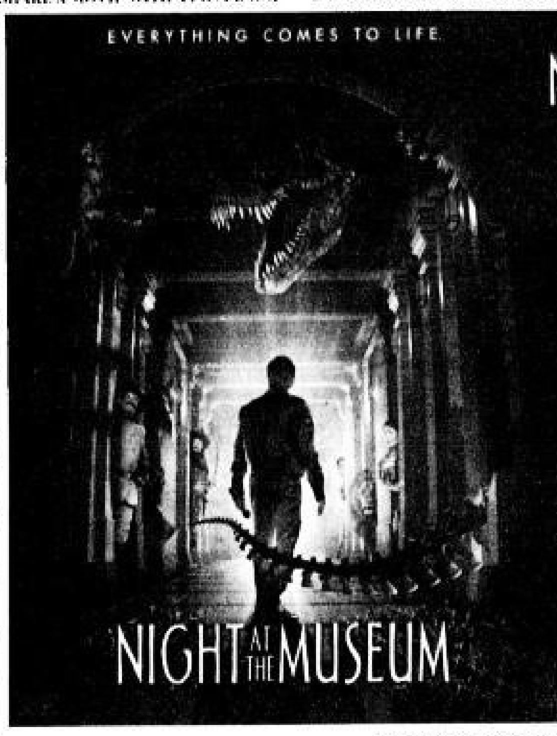

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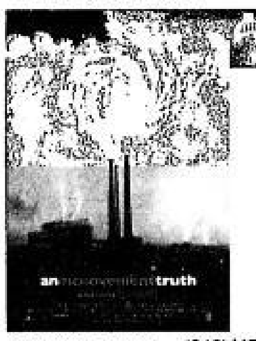

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2 (DOLBY) NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 (DOLBY) APOCALYPTO
4 (DOLBY) RESERVED

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto tel 7334228

1 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE MESSINGERS
4 CODENAME CLEANER
5 HANNIBAL RISING

THE MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong tel 533.3851 / 533.3856

1 TENACIOUS - D
2 PLEASE CALL
3 PLEASE CALL
4 RESERVED

Masagana CINEMA
(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274

1 AGENT X 44
2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
3 HANNIBAL RISING

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)

1 SAW - 3
2 DECK THE HALLS/BLOOD DIAMOND

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 THE MESSINGERS
2 SPIRIT TRAP
3 CHARLOTTE'S WEB
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 HAPPY FEET

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.6963 or 72

1 (DOLBY) HANNIBAL RISING
2 (DOLBY) THE HOLIDAY
3 (DOLBY) APOCALYPTO / NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1 AGENT X 44
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
4

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771

1 ROB-B-HOOD
2 AGENT X 44
3 SAW - 3

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

1 LITTLE CHILDREN
2 AGENT X 44
3 SPIRIT TRAP
4 BLOOD DIAMOND

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320

1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM/A GOOD YEAR
2 AGENT X 44
3 LITTLE CHILDREN

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 ROB-B-HOOD

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4748

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 PLEASE CALL

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 CODENAME CLEANER
2 TAGINIT
3 BALAHIBONG PUSA
4 SAW-3

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 TENACIOUS - D
2 MAPANUKSO
3 THE RETURN
4 KALABIT
5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 CHECK IN
2 BLOOD CHOCOLATE
3 ARTHURE & THE INVISIBLE
4 TENACIOUS - D

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 SAW-3
2 PLEASE CALL

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX
Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City
E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave. (C-5) Quezon City

For inquiries, call:
687-6963
GUARANTEED SEATS
MOVIES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Cinema	Movie	Schedule	Rating
1	HANNIBAL RISING	2:45, 5:40, 8:25, 11:05	R-18
2	THE HOLIDAY	2:20, 5:20, 8:20, 11:10	PG-13
3	APOCALYPTO	2:20, 5:20	R-18
3	NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM	8:30, 11:00	G
4	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	12:55, 3:20, 5:55, 8:30, 11:00	PG-13

SHANG CINEPLEX

1 THE HOLIDAY
MTRCB PG-13
1:00, 4 00, 7.00, 10 00

2 APOCALYPTO
1 00 4 00 MTRCB R 18
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
7 25 10 00 MTRCB GP

3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
MTRCB. R-13
2 10, 4 50, 7 25, 10 00

4 HANNIBAL RISING
MTRCB R-18
1 45, 4 30, 7.15, 10 00

PREMIERE THEATRE
THE MESSENGER
12 30, 2.45, 5.00, 7.15, 9.35 (PG13)

Movies and schedules are subject to change without prior notice

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Call 633-7851, loc. 171/ 170 or 633-2227 for more details.

Shangri-La Plaza

POWER PLANT CINEMA

Rockwell Center, Makati City Tel. No: 8981440-41
DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

CHARLOTTE'S WEB G 12:10,2:25 APOCALYPTO R18 4:40,7:30,10:20	THE MESSENGERS PG13 12:30,2:30,4:30, 6:30,8:30,10:30	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER R13 12:30,3:00,5:30, 8:00,10:30
CODE NAME: THE CLEANER PG13 2:00,4:00,6:00, 8:00,10:00	HANNIBAL RISING R18 2:50,5:20,7:50,10:20	THE HOLIDAY PG13 1:55,4:45,7:35,10:25

MOVIES AND SCREENING SCHEDULES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE: FOR VERIFICATION CALL 898-144041
MATINNEE 110.00 FREE SEATING SCREENING BEFORE 5:00P.M. – MONDAY-FRIDAY

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GREENHILLS SHOPPING CENTER, ORTIGAS AVENUE, GREENHILLS, SAN JUAN, METRO MANILA

THEATRE MALL GREENHILLS
a landmark reinvented!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 1 THE MESSENGER
11:15 , 1:35 , 3:50
6:05 , 8:20 , 10:35
PG-13

CINEMA 2 THE HOLIDAY
11:45 , 3:00 , 6:10
9:20
PG-13

DOLBY DIGITAL SURROUND-EX

PROMENADE GREENHILLS
...a dinstertainment for all!
NOW SHOWING

CINEMA 3 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
11:15 , 2:00 , 4:40
7:20 , 10:00
R-13

CINEMA 4 HANNIBAL RISING

CINEMA 5 THE HOLIDAY
10:30 , 1:30 , 4:30
7:30 , 10:30
PG-13

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM

Date	Event	Time
Feb 7 & 8 , 2007	Agot Isidro "Back to Basics"	8:30 PM
Feb 09 , 2007	BIMBO CERRUDO " TONIGHT MY LOVE"	8:30 PM
Feb 13 & 14 , 2007	OGIE ALCASID AND AI - AI	8:00 PM
Feb 16 & 17 , 2007	Passion Y Fuego	8:00 PM

TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS

Date	Event	Time
EVERY MONDAY	DANCE NIGHT	7:00 PM
Feb 06 & 20 , 2007	DYORDS KO PO	8:30 PM
February 11 , 2007	LOVI POE "A BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION"	9:00 PM
Feb 13 & 14 , 2007	RAYMUND LAUCHENGCO	8:30 PM

FOR INQUIRIES & RESERVATION, PLS. CALL : 721-6726 OR 721-0635

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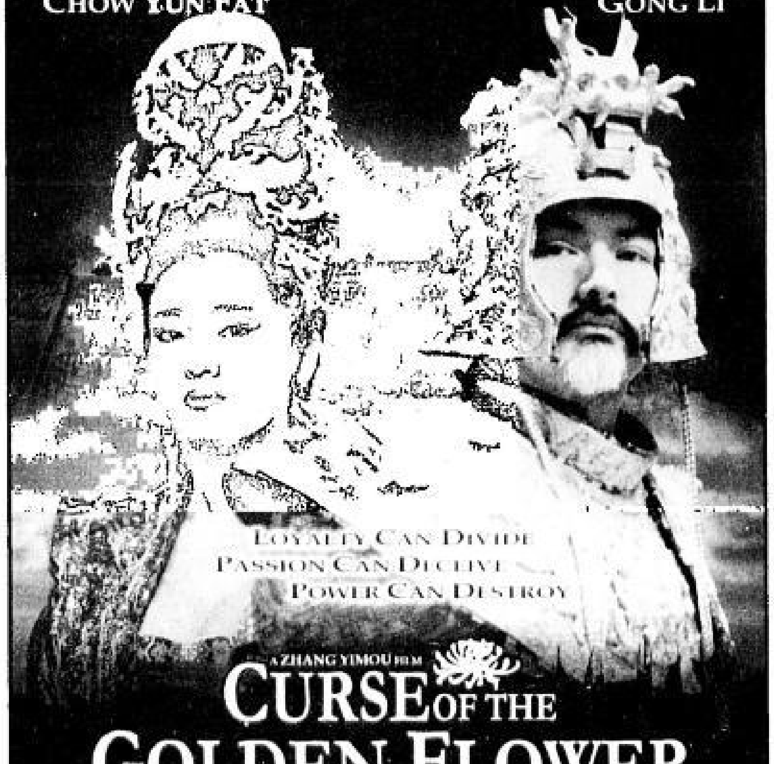


LOYALTY CAN DIVIDE
PASSION CAN DECEIVE
POWER CAN DESTROY

A ZHANG YIMOU FILM
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER

www.curseofthegoldenflowermovie.com
DISTRIBUTED BY BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL

Distributed by Buena Vista International thru Columbia Pictures

Film puts protagonist through the wringer

ADVANCE WORD ON **WILL SMITH'S** LATEST starrer, "The Pursuit of Happyness," bills the movie as the new millennium's equivalent of the quintessential 1946 inspirational film, "It's A Wonderful Life."

After previewing the new film, however, we beg to disagree. It *is* an inspiring film, but it puts its protagonist through the wringer much more rigorously than **Frank Capra's** earlier production.

In fact, Smith's character has such a hard time in the course of "Happyness" that empathizing viewers end up emotionally in tatters themselves. So, "The Pursuit of Happyness" is not a movie for slap-happy escapists, but for viewers who are prepared to "suffer" with its protagonist, until the sun *finally* shines on him at film's end.

Based on the true-to-life gauntlet ran and survived by **Chris Gardner**, "Happyness" tests its protagonist's mettle relentlessly by heaping one problem after seemingly insurmountable problem on his resolute but anguished shoulders.

Smith's character starts off on the wrong economic foot by not going to college, getting married early, and betting his future on selling a medical machine that doctors find too expensive and not all that useful to them.

After months of hard work but precious little income, Chris' wife throws up her hands and walks out of the unhappy marriage.

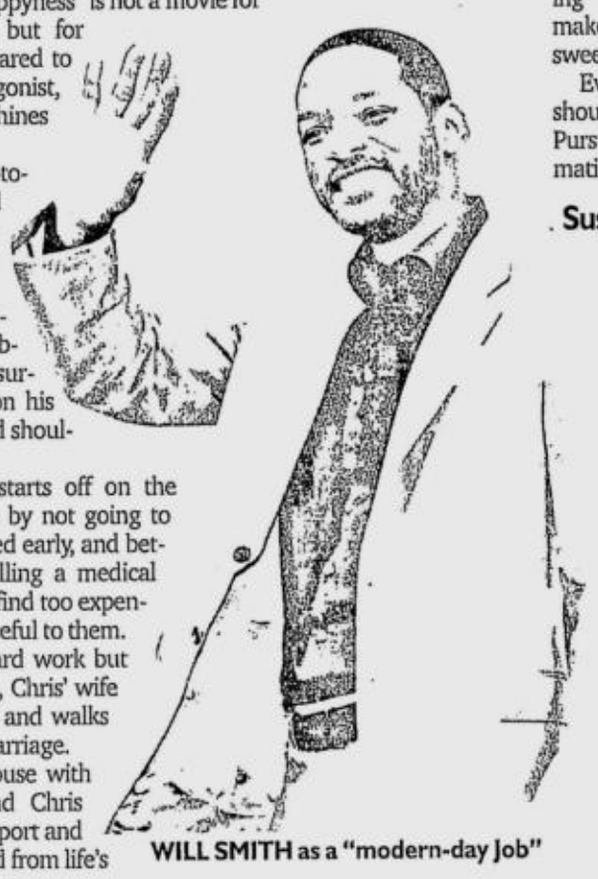
She leaves her spouse with their young son, and Chris strives mightily to support and protect his young child from life's harrowing vicissitudes.

The challenge proves truly daunting, because things go from bad to worse for the breadwinner who can't seem to earn enough bread to even keep up a roof over his son's head.

He finds a ray of hope in the *possibility* of his finding prosperous employment as a stockbroker, despite his sorry lack of education and experience. But most people think that he's clawing at straws and digging for fool's gold.

But a drowning man has precious few options, so Chris perseveres, even as his world falls in shambles around him.

It truly is a miracle when he finally triumphs, but it's an "earned" miracle, because Chris has practically staked his and his son's lives on his make-or-break gambit.



WILL SMITH as a "modern-day Job"

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

On point of performance, Smith ennobles the film with his quietly intense, felt and insightful portrayal of his "modern-day Job" character. Even more impressively, his own son, Jayden, also comes up with a winsome and winning performance as Chris' child.

What makes Jayden's achievement so impressive is his portrayal's utter naturalness and believability. The new child actor doesn't seem to be acting at all, yet he hits all of his high thespic points with the cool focus of a sharpshooter.

Actors who want to understand what "not acting" and "being" for film really mean should make it a point to catch "Happyness" for Jayden's sweetly instructive portrayal.

Even if you aren't an actor, however, you should do yourself a favor and also view "The Pursuit of Happyness" for its many other cinematic treats.

Susan Fernandez

February is Philippine-German Month on "Paco Park Presents" and at 7 p.m. on Feb. 9, the program's featured performer is singer and guitarist **Susan Fernandez**.

'XXXL Larger Than Life'

The Metropolitan Museum of Manila opened its exhibition, "XXXL Larger Than Life," on Feb. 8 at its Tall Galleries. Featured are large-scale artworks by a host of outstanding artists, including National Artists Legaspi, Manansala, Luz, Bencab and Ang Kiukok. Until April 6.

'Mighty Big Headstand'

Cesare A. X. Syjuco's latest literary hybrids are on view (until Feb. 17) at MAG:NET, Paseo de Roxas, Makati.

ARANETA CENTER

Gateway Mall Farmers Plaza

THE ONLY CINEPLEX IN THE COUNTRY — Gateway CinePlex*10 — DOLBY DIGITAL-EX

THE HOLIDAY 2:00 / 4:30 / 7:00 / 9:30	HANNIBAL RISING 2:20 / 4:50 / 7:20 / 9:50	THE MESSENGERS 1:40 / 3:40 / 5:40 / 7:40 / 9:40	GCE Platinum Cinema
CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER 2:05 / 4:35 / 7:05 / 9:35	NEVERWAS 2:00 / 4:40 / 7:20 / 10:00	CODENAME: THE CLEANER 12:20 / 2:30 / 4:40 / 6:50 / 9:00	
NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM 1:50 / 4:30 / 7:10 / 9:50	APOCALYPTO 12:40 / 3:40 / 6:40 / 9:50	HOLLYWOODLAND 2:30 / 7:00 / 9:30; CHARLOTTE'S WEB 12:30 / 5:00	THE HOLIDAY 1:25 / 3:55 / 6:25 / 8:55

Almall 5

HANNIBAL RISING 12:45 / 3:15 / 5:45 / 8:15	THE MESSENGERS 12:40 / 2:40 / 4:40 / 6:40 / 8:40	APOCALYPTO 12:10 R4 / 2:10 / 5:10 / 8:10
AGENT X-44 12:20 / 2:20 / 4:20 / 6:20 / 8:20	CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER 12:50 / 3:20 / 5:50 / 8:20	DOLBY DIGITAL · 4K · SDDS

For ticket inquiries, please call TicketNet at 911-5555 or log on to www.ticketnet.com.ph

ARANETA COLISEUM

SHARON CUNETA - MY MEGA VALENTINE 2 — February 10, Saturday 8 pm

CLIFF RICHARD " Here and Now Tour 2007" — February 13, Tuesday 8 pm

Glorietta · Greenbelt · Alabang Town Center · Ayala Center Cebu · Market! Market! · Ayala Malls

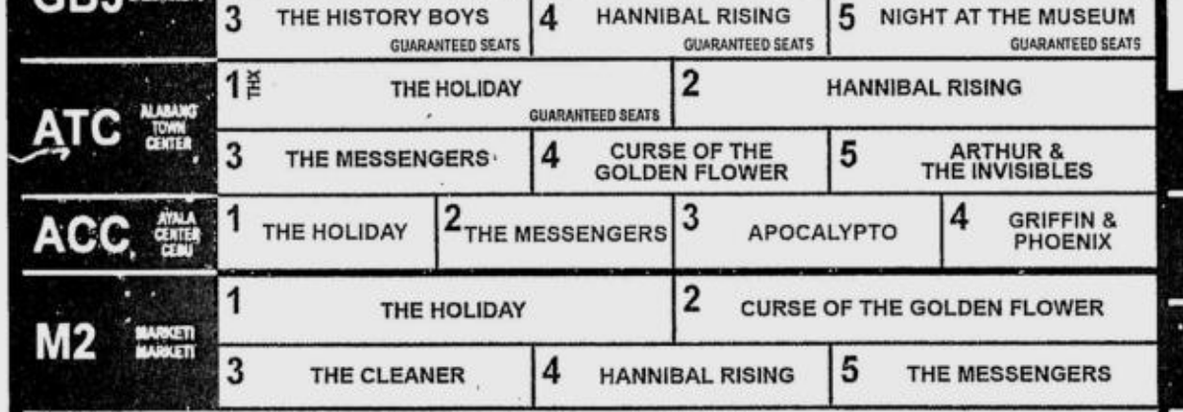
AT THE CINEMAS

Reserve your tickets by texting SURESEATS GB3 or SURESEATS G4 to 2333 (Globe) or 211 (Smart) or log on to www.sureseats.com for web reservations.
Movie schedules may change without prior notice. For verification please call 729 7777

TFX

G1 GLORIETTA 1	1 THE CLEANER	2 THE HOLIDAY	3 HANNIBAL RISING	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER
G4 GLORIETTA 4	1 NIGHT AT HE MUSEUM	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 THX HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE HISTORY BOYS	5 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	6 THE HOLIDAY	7 APOCALYPTO
GB1 GREENBELT 1	1 APOCALYPTO		2 THE HOLIDAY	
GB3 GREENBELT 3	1 THX THE MESSENGERS GUARANTEED SEATS		2 THX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS	
	3 THE HISTORY BOYS GUARANTEED SEATS	4 HANNIBAL RISING GUARANTEED SEATS	5 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM GUARANTEED SEATS	
ATC ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX THE HOLIDAY GUARANTEED SEATS		2 HANNIBAL RISING	
	3 THE MESSENGERS	4 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	5 ARTHUR & THE INVISIBLES	
ACC AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 THE HOLIDAY	2 THE MESSENGERS	3 APOCALYPTO	4 GRIFFIN & PHOENIX
M2 MARKET! MARKET!	1 THE HOLIDAY		2 CURSE OF THE GOLDEN FLOWER	
	3 THE CLEANER	4 HANNIBAL RISING	5 THE MESSENGERS	

MEET THE BOYS WHO ARE MAKING HISTORY
NOW SHOWING exclusively AT
GLORIETTA 4 & GREENBELT 3 CINEMAS
Ayala Malls CINEMAS



FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES · glorietta · GREENBELT

MTRCB Rating: Restricted 13 (R-13)

At the Activity Center

Customer Service text hotline: 0917 6095900
Customer Service Numbers: Glorietta - 752 7272; from 10am to 9pm; Greenbelt - 757 4853; from 11am to 9pm; Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; from 10am to 8pm; Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc 324; Market! Market! - 886 7519

GLORIETTA	ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Chinese New Year Celebration with Porky Pig February 9, 2007	Celebrate the sweet life at the Town this Valentine's w/ MYMP Live! February 10, 2007
AYALA CENTER CEBU	MARKET! MARKET!
Philippine Arts Festival February 10, 2007	Chinese New Year Celebration with Porky Pig February 10, 2007

GREENBELT — Greenbelt 5 Sneak Peak presents: Collection of Ana Rocha, February 7 to 18, 2007

Onstage — Repertory Philippines presents SONG & DANCE at REP's Globe Theater - February 9 to March 4, 2007. For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710

Ayala MUSEUM — CHINESE DIASPORA: Art Streams from the Mainland (six shows), February 15 to March 27, 2007. For inquiries, please call 757-7117 to 21 or visit www.ayalamuseum.org

Ayala Malls

Living and Loving it at MARKET! MARKET!

Feb. 11
With You...MYMP
Activity Center. 6pm

Bazaar! Bazaar!

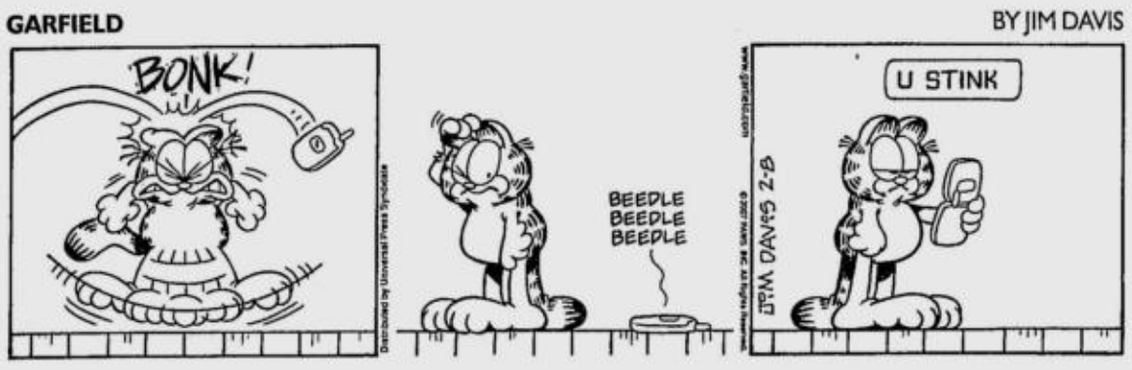
Feb. 12-18
Valentine Bazaar! Bazaar!
Central Plaza

Feb. 10-18
Treats for Two Cinema Promo
For every 2 tickets purchased, get a chance to pick a prize

Feb. 20
The Philippine International Jazz and Arts Festival
Activity Center, 5pm to 9pm

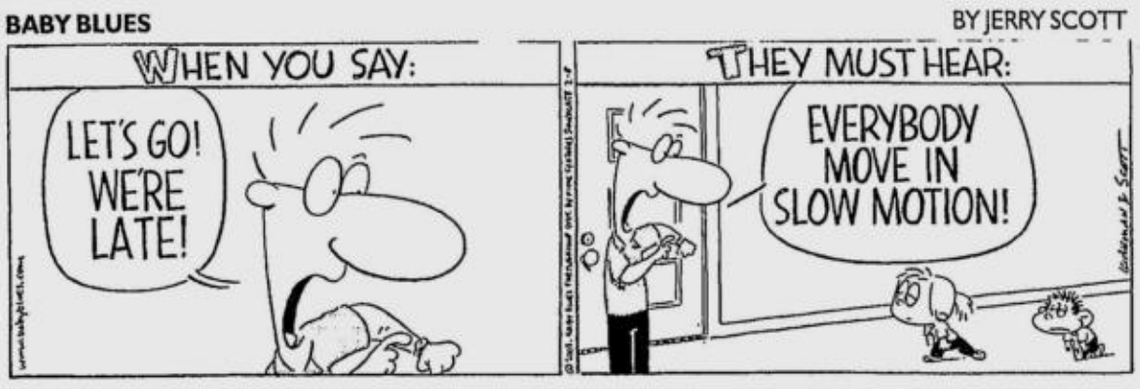
MARKET! MARKET!

GARFIELD BY JIM DAVIS

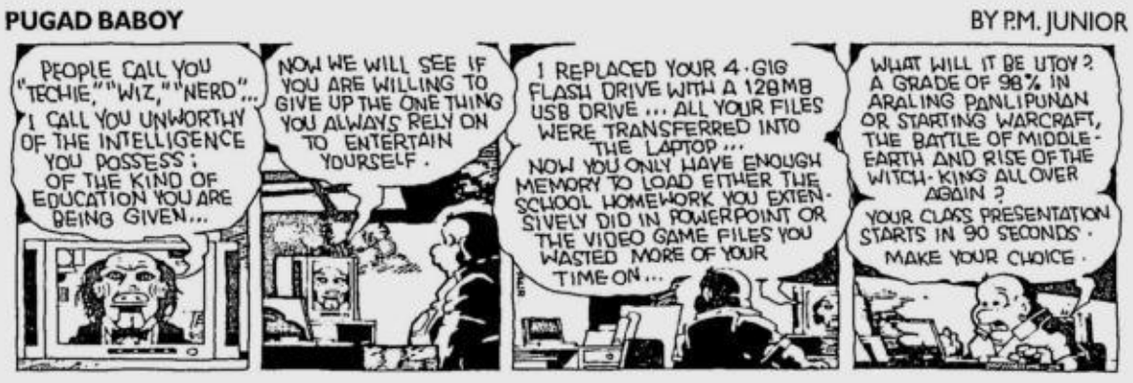


A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT



PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR



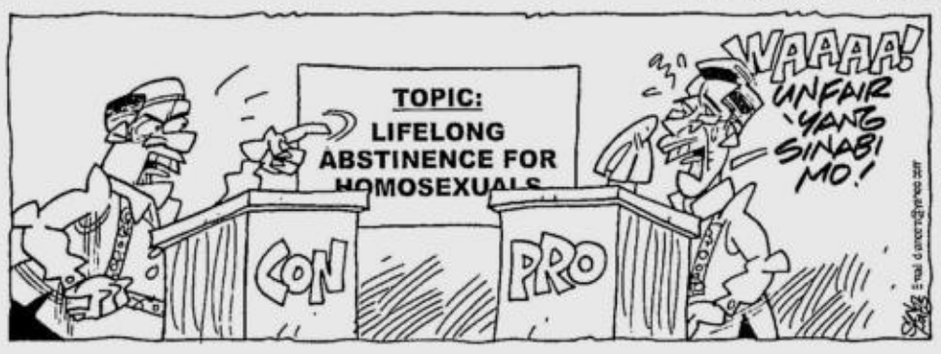
MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO

ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS

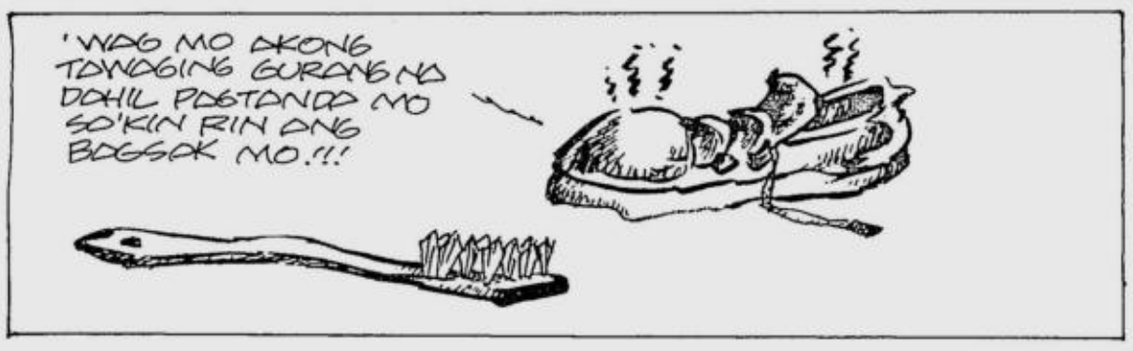
REMINDER: HUWAG NA HUWAG PUMASOK SA ISANG THEOLOGICAL DEBATE KUNG ANG MAKAKALABAN MO AY ISANG BALAT-SIBUYAS. BAKA KASI ISUMBONG KA PA NIYA SA MOMMY NIYA



KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA

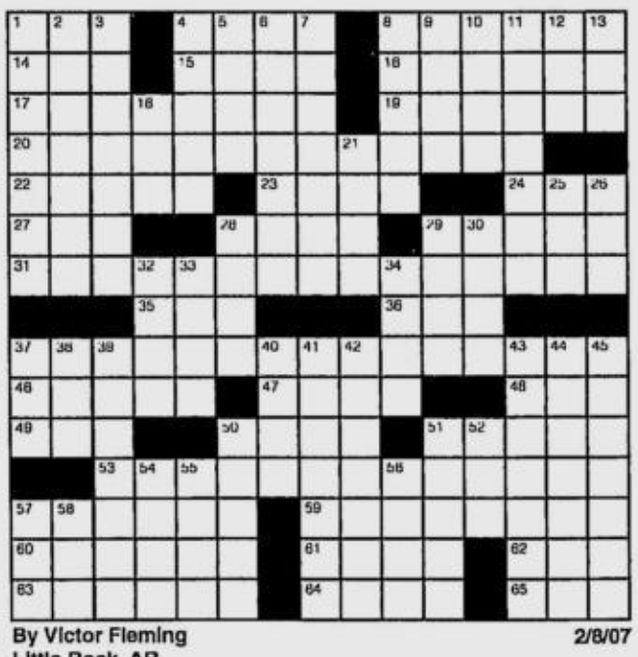
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING



BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Victor Fleming
Little Rock, AR

2/8/07

ACROSS
1 EMT's special skill
4 Hard and fast rules
8 Be wishy-washy
14 Tic-tac-toe win
15 Latin learner's verb
16 Lace tips
17 Plummet
19 Squashes
20 Start of a quip
22 Take down a peg
23 More than fudges
24 Post-ER place
27 Cool dude
28 Ward of "The Fugitive"
29 Key of Chopin's "Minute Waltz"
31 Part 2 of quip
35 Foreman KO'er
36 Yokohama OK
37 Part 3 of quip
46 Skater Sasha
47 Sp. miss
48 Half of deux
49 Zone for DDE
50 Mike's "Wayne's World" co-star
51 Actress Berger
53 End of quip
57 L.A. tar pits
59 Hammer's creator
60 Of the backbone
61 Mastodon feature
62 ACLU concerns
63 Egg amounts
64 Fr. holy women
65 To this day

DOWN
1 Reach
2 Bureaucratic VIP
3 Promising
4 Stew server
5 Surrounded by
6 Ripple
7 Totally disinfected
8 Pay
9 Intensely eager
10 Chimney passage
11 Highly productive
12 Upscale '60s Ford
13 Curvy path
18 Greek Aurora
21 Put on
25 Tender or Pullman
26 Shoshone
28 Move slightly
29 Refusing to listen
30 Email opinion letters
32 Subside
33 Carolina university
34 Hold your horses!
37 Rink surface
38 __ so fast!
39 H'wood industry
40 Munich's river
41 Tubb and Truex
42 Don't move!
43 Kingdom founded by St. Stephen
44 Informal alliance
45 Closest
50 Bargains
51 Moody exhibitions
52 Bigger pic
54 Coastal bird
55 Gradually break from a habit
56 Seine feeder
57 '60s hallucinogen
58 PFC's address

Wednesday's Puzzle Solved

S	L	A	B	■	M	I	A	S	■	S	P	I	C	E
P	I	N	E	■	E	R	M	A	■	M	A	S	O	N
A	N	N	A	■	S	A	U	L	■	I	C	O	N	S
R	E	A	D	T	H	E	R	I	O	T	A	C	T	■
S	A	L	S	A	■	■	■	N	T	H	■	L	E	N
E	R	S	■	T	A	B	L	E	T	■	L	I	S	A
■	■	■	P	A	R	E	E	■	■	D	A	N	T	E
■	L	E	A	R	N	T	H	E	R	O	P	E	S	■
S	E	M	I	S	■	■	A	D	I	O	S	■	■	■
E	G	A	D	■	E	R	R	A	N	D	■	D	A	S
W	A	C	■	S	K	I	■	■	■	L	L	A	N	O
■	L	I	S	T	E	N	T	O	R	E	A	S	O	N
S	E	A	T	O	■	G	A	L	E	■	C	H	I	A
A	S	T	I	N	■	E	R	I	E	■	K	E	N	T
L	E	E	R	Y	■	R	A	N	D	■	S	R	T	A

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2/8/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You have an inquiring mind. You're intelligent, and you love to explore whatever new things you can possibly learn. Some of you have psychic abilities; many of you have specific technical skills. Because you have a dramatic flair and an excellent imagination, others love to listen to you. The year ahead is full of exciting new beginnings. Choose any road.

Birthdate of: James Dean, actor; Evangeline Adams, astrologer; Alonzo Mourning, NBA player.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Talk to a friend or a member of a group who agrees with you about certain ideals. This is the kind of day where you can join forces with someone to make a difference in the lives of others.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You might want to help a parent or an authority figure today. You feel very sympathetic for what somebody else has to go through or deal with at this time. Do whatever you can.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your ideals are aroused today. If you can do anything to help people who are far away or in another country, do so. You're also attracted to unusual philosophies and esoteric knowledge.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Make sure you defend your own best interests if you have to divide some shared property today. Feelings of sympathy for others could make you give away the store.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): If you can help a partner or a close friend today, you will do it. Similarly, someone might want to help you. People feel very sympathetic to each other today.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Perhaps a coworker needs to confide in you today, or perhaps vice versa. Something has aroused your sympathy related to your job or even your health.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Love at first sight might happen for some of you today. Romance is terribly idealistic and sweet. Feelings of affection and sympathy can also be generated for children right now

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're more sensitive to the needs of a family member today. You want to help someone at home. It's very easy to put the needs of others before your own today.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Be extra-careful in all your discussions with others. Your antennas are way out there; thus, you're receiving more information than usual. This could cause confusion. (No filters.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You're tempted to spend money on something extravagant today. That's because you're motivated by your wants, not your needs.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You're very aware of everything around you. You're highly stimulated today because you're very in tune with your environment.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You feel quite selfless today. You want to help others who are less fortunate than you.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis Sudoku by Dave Green

8				3		6		
			4	6				
			2		9			8
	6	8				5		
7	9						3	1
		1				8	4	
4			8		3			
				7	1			
		9		5				3

Difficulty Level ★★★

2/08

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

9	4	2	5	1	3	7	8	6
3	8	7	9	6	4	5	2	1
1	6	5	2	7	8	3	4	9
8	3	6	1	5	2	9	7	4
4	5	1	3	9	7	2	6	8
2	7	9	8	4	6	1	5	3
5	1	4	6	2	9	8	3	7
7	2	3	4	8	1	6	9	5
6	9	8	7	3	5	4	1	2

Difficulty Level ★★★

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'So sad' to be out of 'Starstruck' tilt

RICH ASUNCION

By Nini Valera

RICH ASUNCION, A FORMER Miss Tagbilaran, kept her bearings during the tension-filled minutes leading to the announcement on Sunday that she and Jan Manual of Laguna were the latest casualties in the reality talent search, "Starstruck The Next Level."

Asuncion, 18, a Psychology major at the Holy Name University in Tagbilaran, refused to shed tears, saying, "I don't want them to see me crying," referring to the eight remaining finalists.

"I will just go back home," she told INQUIRER Entertainment. "I don't have [other] plans. I am so sad ..."

Asuncion had gotten the lowest number of text and Internet votes among the girls in the last two weeks.

Earlier, Manual voted off Asuncion and suggested that she join the Bb. Pilipinas beauty pageant instead. Asked if she might do that, Asuncion said, "I will just go home."

She admitted in earlier interviews that she came from a poor family. She even told INQUIRER that she had been sending home part of her weekly allowance of P4,000.

Bed-bound

But the dream has not ended for Manual, 21. He said he was set to form a band with the other finalists, including Mart Escudero.

"I'll still be around," he vowed. "My band will perform in 'SOP' (GMA 7's Sunday variety show)."

But first, Manual said, he needed to catch up on his sleep, as he had found little time to rest since entering "Starstruck."

He also planned to go back to school at the System Management and Technical Institute in Laguna.

Like Rich, he refused to cry when he got the boot. "Crying would have meant I did not accept the verdict. I am happy I made it this far."

Courting Jesi

Then Manual dropped a bomb: "My only concern is, what will happen to my courtship of Jesi (Corcuera)?" He was referring to another finalist, the self-confessed lesbian from Pasay City.

"Yes, I'm serious," Manual said. "I call her regularly. She couldn't believe it [at first], never imagined that I would fall for her. I like her attitude, and if we ever fought, I would know who she'd run to, and it's not another man."

Both Asuncion and Manual each received P25,000 and a Belgian Waffle franchise as part of their prize.

CHEER FACTOR

Rock 'n' roll sites map

LONDON—WANT TO see where Jimi Hendrix lived, where The Beatles got their start —or even where Adam and the Ants filmed the video for "Stand and Deliver"?

A new tourist map of England, launched Monday, aims to help music-loving visitors find landmarks in the country's musical history, from the site of those early Fab Four gigs to the Manchester boys' club that inspired The Smiths.

Some of the more than 100 locations highlighted on the map, produced by the Visit Britain tourist agency, are legendary. Liverpool's Cavern Club, where The Beatles honed their craft, and London's Abbey Road Studios, where they recorded, are well-established tourist sites.

So is Salford Lads Club in Manchester, featured on the sleeve of The Smiths' 1986 album "The Queen is Dead."

AP

music and lyrics

80's Memorabilia Display

Calling all 80's yuppies!!!

To join, submit any 80's memorabilia (albums, songs and lyrics, records, posters and other music related items) on a half illustration board. Attach description of the entry with your name and age at the lower front of the entry and your complete personal information at the upper right back corner of the entry of the board.

Deadline of submission is on *February 09, 2007*. Submit all entries to the Marketing Department at L4 Robinsons Movieworld Galleria Cinema 5. Winners will get advance screening movie invites and music and lyrics gift packs.

For inquiries, please call the Marketing Department, at 395-2188 locs. 230 / 240

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MTRCB RATING PG-13 Children below 13 yrs. old only be allowed if accompanied by a parent or adult.

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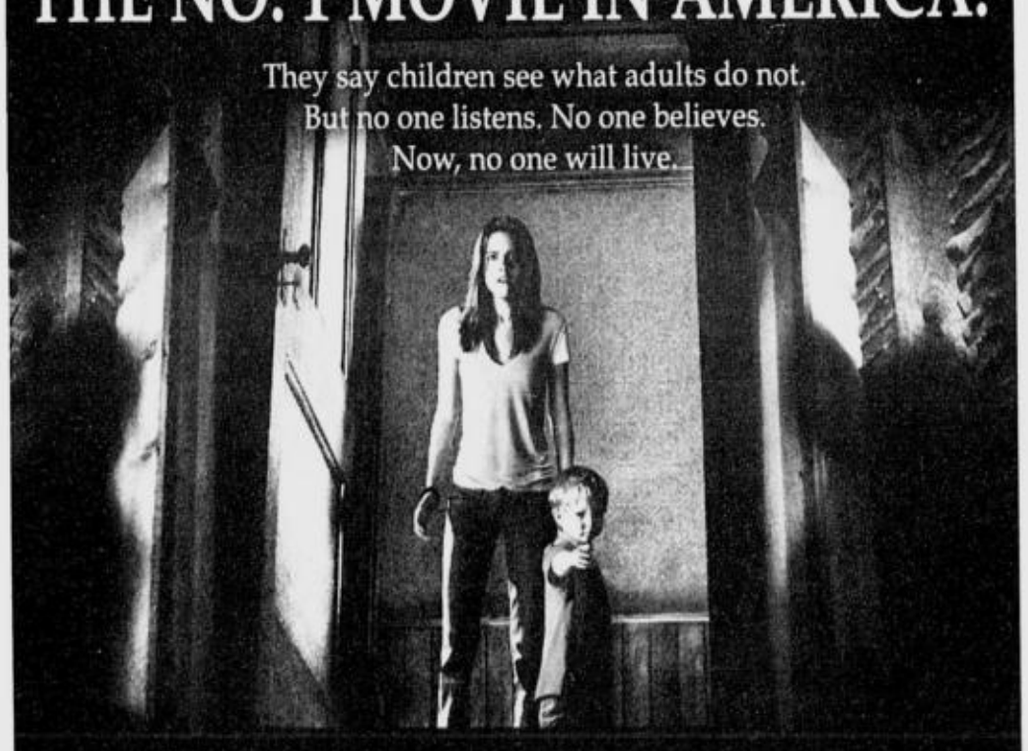

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1 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM • THX	6 THE MESSENGER
2 THE CLEANER	7 APOCALYPTO
3 indieSine: COMPOUND	8 CHARLOTTE's WEB
4 THE HOLIDAY	9 HANNIBAL RISING
5 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	10 LITTLE CHILDREN BLOOD and CHOCOLATE

ERMITA — Ticket Price: P110 536-7809 to 12

1 HANNIBAL RISING	
2 NIGHT at the MUSEUM	5 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE CLEANER	6 THE MESSENGER
4 THE HOLIDAY	7 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE APOCALYPTO

METRO EAST — Ticket Price: P100 682-8193 • 682-8199

1 THE CLEANER	5 THE MESSENGER
2 HANNIBAL RISING	6 BLOOD and CHOCOLATE
3 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	7 APOCALYPTO
4 THE HOLIDAY	8 NIGHT at the MUSEUM

NOVALICHES — Ticket Price: P91 935-3231 / 935-3229-30

1 THE HOLIDAY	4 THE MESSENGER
2 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	5 THE CLEANER
3 APOCALYPTO	

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1 THE HOLIDAY	3 HANNIBAL RISING
2 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER	4 THE MESSENGER

CHECK THIS OUT

Robinsons Movieworld and Independent Filmmakers Cooperative

FEBRUARY 7 - 13, 2007
IndieSine, Robinsons Galleria

A stunning visual achievement, COMPOUND is a contemporary thriller that deals with the complexities of love, wealth, and fear. A perfectly unexpected and well-executed ending make this a film not to be missed.
- Cleveland Intl. Film Festival

"Melrose Place", as seen through the unflinching eyes of David Lynch and Mike de Leon.
- Paul Daza, Philippine Daily Inquirer

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2 AGENT X44
3 ARTHUR and the INVISIBLES
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1 THE HOLIDAY
2 APOCALYPTO
3 THE MESSENGER
4 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

ANGELES — Ticket Price: P90 (045) 892-2348

1 THE MESSENGER
2 APOCALYPTO
3 CHARLOTTE's WEB
4 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

IMUS — Ticket Price: P100 (046) 875-3838 (046) 471-8188

1 THE HOLIDAY
2 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER
3 THE MESSENGER
4 APOCALYPTO
NIGHT at the MUSEUM

STARMILLS — Ticket Price: P75 / 80 (045) 875-1927

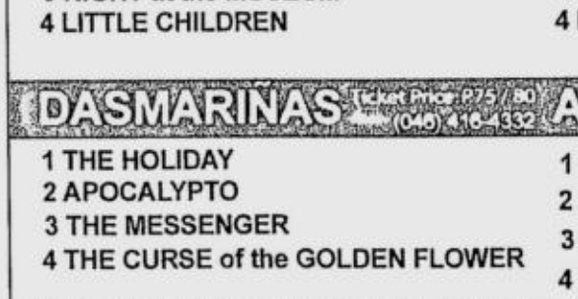
1 APOCALYPTO
2 THE MESSENGER
3 NIGHT at the MUSEUM
4 CHARLOTTE's WEB
5 AGENT X44
6 THE CURSE of the GOLDEN FLOWER

BACOLOD — Ticket Price: P70 (034) 441-0453

1 BLOOD DIAMOND
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 ROB-B-HOOD
4 AGENT X44
5 GRIFFIN and PHOENIX
6 TENACIOUS D

ILOILO — Ticket Price: P60.50/67.50/70.50 (033) 336-8070

1 CHARLOTTE's WEB
2 NIGHT AT THE MUSEUM
3 BLOOD DIAMOND
4 SPIRIT TRAP
5 AGENT X44
6 ROB-B-HOOD



music and lyrics

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Just can't get enough of KC Concepcion

SHARON CUNETA SEEMED irked when she was interviewed by "S-Files" regarding the picture of her daughter **KC Concepcion** and TV director **Lino Cayetano** (taken in Hong Kong) that came out in this column last week.

I respect Mega's feelings. As a mom, I'm also protective of my kids. But since my son IC is in show biz, I have accepted the fact that it's beyond my control when people take pictures of him with a date—and it lands in the papers. KC may not be actively in show biz but she's a celebrity, like it or not, with all those commercials she has made.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

When a reader e-mailed me the picture, I got excited and wanted to share it with everybody. Nobody can seem to get enough of KC. She really is hot property.

The same reader (**Kace Cayetano**—pure coincidence) have not sent me these pictures of KC and Lino taken at the wedding reception for friends of KC's last Jan. 13 at Sofitel Philippine Plaza. It is my only hope that Shawie won't take it against me. Just as she picks out wonderful songs for her repertoire, I also have to choose interesting subjects/pics for my column.

I am eternally grateful to Sha for all the help she selflessly extended during my ma's ICU days and my darkest hours. But that's a different story. Knowing Sha, she wouldn't want to make a big fuss about that. She's that kind-hearted.

I hope that very same heart will forgive me for jumping at the sight of KC's pictures with Lino and eagerly printing them here. Why deprive the public the vicarious joy of watching a romance blossom especially this Valentine week?

KC Concepcion and Lino Cayetano, above, at the wedding reception last month for a close friend of hers, below.

Why deprive the public the vicarious joy of watching a romance blossom, especially this Valentine week?

'Love to Laugh'

Ogie Alcasid and **Ai-Ai de las Alas** join forces in a mad mix of romantic and crazy medleys in "Love to Laugh" Feb. 13 and 14, 8:30 p.m., at the Music Museum.

I asked Ogie and Ai the funniest thing they did for love. Ogie said, "When I was 15, I had to make my voice sound like a girl because my GF's parents were so strict. Then one time, my voice cracked!" As for Ai: "*Noong baliw na baliw ako sa pag-ibig, muntik akong ihulog sa* building *ng* BF *ko kasi sobra akong magselos!*" Enough of mushy "kilig to the bones" shows. Let these two comic greats tickle your funny bone instead. After all, love and laughter go well together. Call 891-9999 or 854-3300.

FYI (For Your Indulgence)

• When **TJ Manotoc** introduced me to his brother **Borgy**, he (Borgy) seemed so mild-mannered. Thus, it's quite appalling to hear all sorts of stories about his war-freak tendencies.

Borgy's latest tiff was with Bong Alvarez at Embassy club. Bong allegedly mistook Borgy's GF **Ornussa Cadness** for a waitress and this did not sit too well with Borgy. How condescending! What's wrong with being in the service crew, anyway?

Borgy is so used to having things served on a silver platter. He should also try to look at the other side of the table.

• **Alfred Vargas** and **LJ Reyes** insist they are in a "cool-off" period. But they were seen together watching "Peter Pan" at the CCP. Maybe, just like Peter who refuses to grow up, they can't outgrow their fondness for each other.

• Is **Vina Morales'** boyfriend, **C.L.** married, divorced or on the verge of filing for annulment? Could it be true that Vina had an unpleasant encounter with his (ex?) wife? It's quite tricky when you can't tell if you're the cause or the effect of a separation.

• **Angel Locsin's** manager **Becky Aguila** sent me this text: "I wanna clear up the issue that came out in the tabs. Angel and I have patched up our differences. She also kissed and made up with my twins last Dec. 27. Angel will formally withdraw the case against me. We were separated for a year and a half. We're making up for lost time."

It's good that even if Angel is flying high, her "wings" still lead her back to Becky.

'Lil Big Superstar'

ABS-CBN launches "Little Big Superstar," the newest search for the next top child performer, on Feb. 10 at 5 p.m. "Super Inggo" **Makisig Morales**, who won in Season 1, hosts the show with **Sarah Geronimo**. Will they find a lil "Marilag" to pair with Makisig?

E-mail wateringholeshangri-la@yahoo.com.

Jasmine Trias in Vegas

"AMERICAN IDOL" SEASON 3 SECOND RUNner-up Jasmine Trias is set to do a series of shows at the Flamingo Hotel in Las Vegas from Feb. 15 to March 21, with the Society of Seven. She goes onstage Wednesdays through Sundays.

Trias also just landed a weekly news program that follows the "American Idol" Season 6 follies. Plus, she will be a celebrity judge on the talent contest "Small Kids/Big Talent" on the "Tyra Banks Show."

Her "Jasmine Trias" album, released by Universal Records in the Philippines and now certified gold, has spawned hits—"Excuses," "Sana Lagi" and "Kung Paano"—in Hawaii, the US mainland and throughout Asia.

RUSHES

Back to dating

NEW YORK—Jessica Simpson says she was stung when ex-husband Nick Lachey jumped back into dating less than a month after their high-profile breakup.

"Oh, it hurt me," the 26-year-old singer-actress says in an interview in the March issue of Elle magazine, on newsstands Feb. 13.

Lachey, 33, is currently dating Fil-Am Vanessa Minnillo of MTV.

Simpson herself has been photographed with singer-songwriter John Mayer. *AP*

Federline for Taco Bell

LOS ANGELES—His marriage to pop star Britney Spears is on the rocks, his debut album opened to dismal sales and he's making TV commercials playing himself as a fast-food cook.

Now Taco Bell Corp. has invited Kevin Federline to work for an hour behind the counter at one of its restaurants.

Taco Bell president Greg Creed invited Ferderline to work at an unspecified outlet "just for a one-hour shift."

Asked how much Taco Bell might pay for that, spokesperson Poetsch said, "We really haven't discussed money." *Reuters*

Headed for splitsville

LOS ANGELES—Actress Anne Heche's husband has filed for divorce after five years of marriage, citing irreconcilable differences.

Coleman Laffoon has asked the court to award him spousal support and joint custody of the couple's 4-year-old son, Homer.

Heche, 37, and Laffoon, a motion picture cameraman, were married in September 2001.

Heche had a high-profile relationship with Ellen DeGeneres for more than three years. They announced their separation in August 2000. *AP*

JASMINE TRIAS

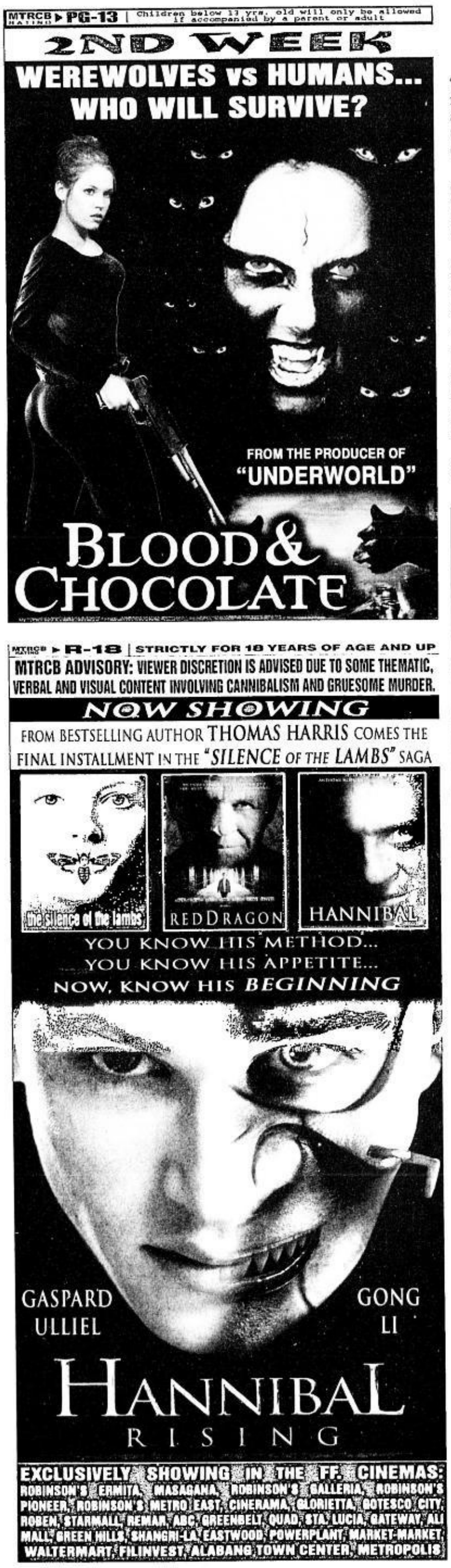
Fawcett cancer-free

LOS ANGELES—Farrah Fawcett got an unbeatable gift for her 60th birthday: A clean bill of health.

The actress, who revealed in October that she was fighting cancer, learned this week that she is cancer-free, spokesperson Mike Pingel said Friday.

Fawcett did not disclose the type of cancer she was treated for. Her ex, Ryan O'Neal, told People Magazine she was being treated for anal cancer. *AP*

JLo honored

LOS ANGELES—Jennifer Lopez will receive an award for her work as producer and star of a film examining the ongoing murders of hundreds of women in a Mexican border town, officials with Amnesty International said Friday.

Lopez will receive the "Artists for Amnesty" award Feb. 14 at the Berlin Film Festival from Nobel Peace Prize winner Jose Ramos-Horta. The film "Bordertown" will make its debut Feb. 15 at the festival. *AP*